

Aviation Technology Leader Mike Hirschberg Honored by SAE International

SAE Fellow Election is Fourth Such Recognition for H2 Advisors Founder

ARLINGTON, VA, UNITED STATES, February 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- SAE International, the global non-profit organization committed to advancing mobility knowledge and solutions for the benefit of humanity, has [announced its 2025 class of SAE Fellows](#), which includes Mike Hirschberg, founder and principal of Hirschberg Heuristics Advisors, LLC. H2 Advisors provides strategic aviation insights to global clients in industry, academia, associations and government agencies.



Mike Hirschberg at Unither Bioelectronics in September 2025. (UT photo)

Founded in 1905 as the Society of Automotive Engineers, SAE International is a professional and standards-developing organization for the engineering profession in the aerospace and automotive sectors, with more than 200,000 individual members. The SAE Fellow grade recognizes members who have made a significant impact on society's mobility technology through leadership, research and innovation. SAE's citation for Hirschberg's award reads:

For 35 years of impactful international leadership of and advocacy for research and development of cutting-edge aircraft and propulsion approaches, such as rockets, military jets, helicopters, drones and other types of vertical takeoff and landing aircraft (VTOL) and technologies, including advanced air mobility (AAM) and hydrogen aviation.

Most notably, Hirschberg led the Vertical Flight Society (VFS) during 2011–2023; founded in 1943 as the American Helicopter Society (AHS), it was the first non-profit that brought together the leaders and engineers of the global helicopter community. As the VFS Executive Director, he spearheaded industry support to the Future Vertical Lift (FVL) initiative — which has now led to the Army's revolutionary MV-75 Valor tiltrotor — as well as the nascent electric vertical takeoff

and landing (eVTOL) community, with several companies now nearing certification of their advanced air mobility (AAM) aircraft. His leadership at VFS contributed to important improvements in vertical flight safety, noise, sustainability, technology and acceptance.

In 2014, when the idea of electric vertical flight was first being explored, VFS organized the world's first eVTOL technical meeting in 2014, launched the world's first eVTOL eNewsletter in 2016, the world's first dedicated eVTOL website in 2017 (www.evtol.news) and the world's first eVTOL short course in 2018.

Hirschberg was also the longtime editor of the VFS Vertiflite magazine (1999–2025) and served as its Director of Strategy (2023–2025), continuing to support the advancement of vertical flight and aerospace technology, and advocating on behalf of the industry.

In 2025, Hirschberg founded H2 Advisors to provide consulting services to aerospace and defense organizations, providing expertise in vertical flight, electric flight, hydrogen aviation and other applications of novel aircraft propulsion. Details can be found at www.H2advisors.LLC.

Hirschberg has now been named as a Fellow of the world's four leading aviation technology professional societies, believed to be the first person in history to be so honored. In addition to SAE, he was selected as a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) in 2011 and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) in 2024, and as an Honorary Fellow of the Vertical Flight Society (VFS) in 2025.

"This is an incredible honor for me," said Hirschberg. "I joined SAE in college in the 1980s and have stayed active with it over the past four decades for its leadership in advancing aviation technology."

In the 1990s, he began supporting the International Powered Lift Conference (IPLC) — the world's only dedicated conference spanning the breadth of short takeoff and landing (STOL) and vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft and technologies — which is organized by the same four societies that have now recognized him as a Fellow. Since 2000, he has been part of the IPLC steering committee and has been heavily engaged in organizing and running the biennial event. Hirschberg was the IPLC Chair in 2005, 2008 and 2018, and is chairing this year's IPLC 2026, held in conjunction with SAE International's upcoming AeroTech conference in West Palm Beach, Florida, June 2–4. Details are posted at www.sae.org/aerotech.

In 2022, while at VFS, Hirschberg initiated the world's first in-person hydrogen aviation conference, the H2-Aero Symposium, an annual gathering to highlight progress and remaining challenges in hydrogen for aviation. In 2023, this resulted in the establishment of the SAE International AE-5H Hydrogen Aviation Committee, which is producing regular SAE aerospace information reports (AIRs). The next H2-Aero Symposium will be hosted by AIAA, as part of its annual AVIATION Forum in San Diego, California, June 8 –12. Details are at www.aiaa.org/aviation.

Hirschberg has also been honored by the Rotary Wing Society of India (RWSI) as a Lifetime Member in 2013, and by NASA in its 2023 Honors, selecting him for its prestigious Exceptional Public Service Medal (EPSM).

Hirschberg holds a BS in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Virginia (1991), a Master of Mechanical Engineering from Catholic University of America (1996) and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech) in 2013.

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