



Ernest Sterling Hodge was among the first students to attend Northside High School. At Northside, Ernie played football, basketball, and baseball, lettering in all 3 sports. On Football Awards Day, that fall of 1965, Ernie received the Most-Outstanding Back Award for his contribution as a 3-year starter for the Northside Eagles. As graduation neared, Ernie was selected by the senior class student council to be named as a favorite in the Class of 1966 Yearbook. He was named as “Friendliest” in that annual, was a senior honor student, and also won the Most Outstanding Citizen Award. On that awards day, Head Coach Matt Arthur further honored Ernie by presenting him with the JIMMY PERKINS award, which was awarded in memory of a fellow Northside Eagle. Coach Arthur presented this yearly award “to the best male senior athlete, who lettered in at least two sports and who was also an example of excellent personal character and outstanding sportsmanship”.

As Ernie prepared to attend Georgia Tech that fall of 1966, a tragic accident while working on a summer construction job left him a quadriplegic for life. Having given a determined effort at rehabilitation for 1 year, Ernie was accepted in the aeronautical engineering program at the University of Illinois where he received his B.S. in 1971. While at UI, Ernie met and married his lovely wife Mary Pat Van Osdol, herself a wheelchair athlete. At the University of Illinois, Ernie was thrilled to learn that they had a wheelchair sports program. Ernie became more active athletically during his

second year there and soon was selected to the U.S. Paralympics team. At the games, he received a silver medal in the 50-meter dash. His heroic performance in Buenos Aires resulted in awards in seven events where he placed second in five events and third in one event.

After graduation, the couple moved to Gainesville, Florida where Ernie received his M.S. in Mechanical Engineering in 1973. Ernie began a job with General Electric designing gas turbines. Ultimately, in 1975 the couple moved to Sunnyvale, California where Ernie designed nuclear power plants for GE.

In 1978, Ernie got a job in Tampa, Florida working for Westinghouse Nuclear Steam Generator Division. Ernie worked as a Mechanical Engineer in the design and development of the nuclear steam generators that were sold on the worldwide market. While living in Clearwater, Florida for a few years, Ernie and Mary Pat decided they were ready to take a big step in their marriage and adopt a child. In 1986, after two years of the adoption process, they adopted a healthy baby girl, Melissa, who was three weeks old

Eventually, Ernie and Mary Pat moved to Ft. Worth, Texas where Ernie had accepted a job with the Lockheed-Martin Corporation. Working for this American global aerospace, defense, security, and advanced technologies company was a dream-come-true for Ernie.

During the nine years of Ernie’s employment with Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth, he had the distinction of being among those on the ground floor of production of the F-22 Raptor and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. Ernie was a part of the team that developed the F-22 stealth capability. His team also designed the trademark engine for the F-22 that shifts, or vectors, for changes of thrust direction. This concept provides almost limitless maneuverability at the discretion of the pilot while in flight.

Ernie had been working for Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth, Texas for nine years at the time he was offered a transfer to the company’s location in Marietta, Georgia in 1995. In 1998, after careful consultation with Mary Pat and family, Ernie decided to leave his secure job at Lockheed Martin and start his own company.

Ernie had become very proficient at computer modeling of mechanical systems in aircraft, particularly thermal and power systems. He had also developed an analytical modeling tool while at Lockheed Martin and worked on several major aircraft development projects, such as the F-22 and F-35 fighter aircraft.

Soon, Ernie started his new company, Modelogics, with the idea that his company would be the middleman to support this complex systems modeling. The \$1.1 million contract, with the Air Force Research Labs (AFRL), would pay for developing the core software library of engineering components known as “Model Engineer”. The program was a great success! The team successfully developed the integrated vehicle level model for the Mach 2, 3, and 4 Long Range Strike aircraft. In fact, Modelogics has received \$3.5 million in investments from industry and government to make these improvements and are currently seeking a merger or buy-out with a larger company.

All who know Ernie are inspired by one who has touched each of us so profoundly with his determination and by the example of his never-failing WILL TO WIN!