



John L. Hudson

Program Executive Officer and Program Director
USAF Joint Strike Fighter Program
MSAE '74

For his outstanding service to the defense of the United States, particularly as director of the Joint Strike Fighter Program

A Simple Wish

“I grew up wanting to fly and to become an aviator. That’s why I chose engineering, specifically aeronautics and astronautics. I wanted to learn as much about the field as I could,” says Jack Hudson.

“I chose Purdue for my master’s degree because the Air Force Academy had an agreement that Purdue would accept about a half dozen second lieutenants from the Academy for its master’s program. I had really good grades at the Academy, and Purdue accepted me. It was known then, as it has been known for a long, long time, that Purdue had a great program.”

“I loved school there,” says Hudson. “I remember especially Professor Osborn’s course on ballistics of space vehicles. He taught us a lot, but he is also a great human being. He made class a lot of fun. While I was in school, I was mainly concerned with finishing my degree, but I had a great time. I knew that I was going to do what I always wanted, to fly, and, while I was there, I met Marsha Shoemaker, the woman I am married to today.” Ironically, Hudson did not fly while studying at Purdue. He entered the Air Force pilot training program after completing his MS.

Into the Blue

Hudson says that his career surprises him. “While I was a student, I knew that I would go off to pilot training, but I didn’t know which planes I would fly. I was so lucky to get into the Air Force Academy and Purdue,” he says. “The part that really surprises me is that, here I am, still in the Air Force and I love what I’m doing.”

Hudson has filled eighteen assignments with the Air Force and has flown more than 3,500 hours in the A-10, A-7, T-38, and 42 other aircraft. He was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in 1999 and to major general in 2002. Currently, he is program executive officer and program director for the Joint Strike Fighter Program, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Research, Development, and Acquisition. The program will develop and produce the next-generation strike warfare weapon system for the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force; for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force; and for the military of other partner countries, including Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Turkey, and Australia.

“I have to rely on my engineering background in this position. That training, along with my flying experience, has given me the judgment I need to work with the many

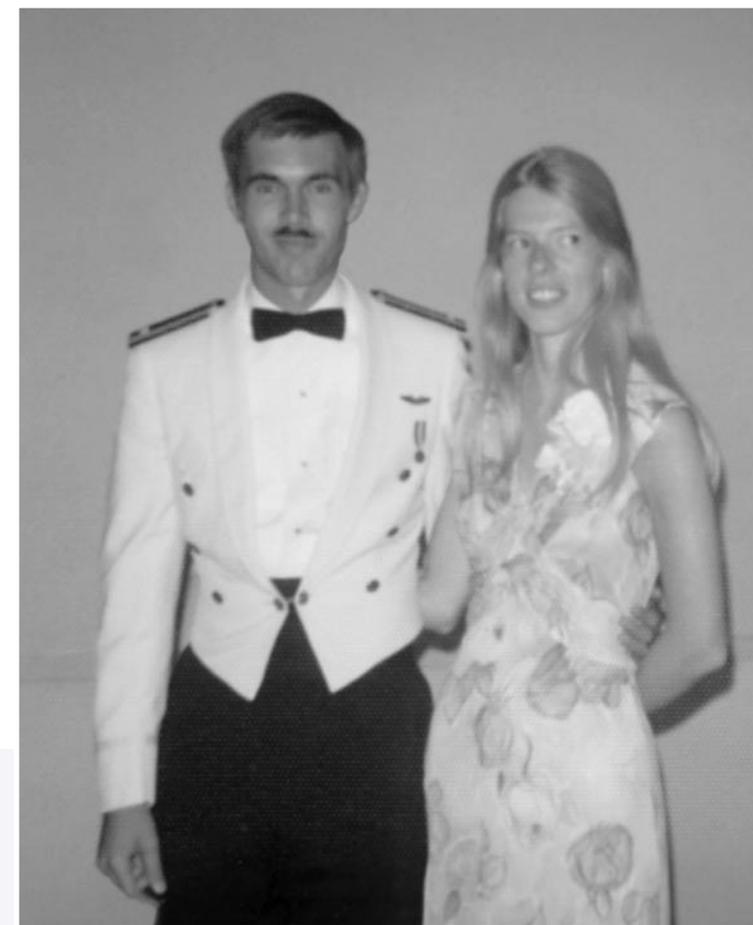
engineers and administrators involved. Lockheed-Martin, Pratt & Whitney, and General Electric are the prime contractors; we have people from every partner country working on the project. In addition, as a joint and international program, part of our challenge is to take people from different backgrounds and nationalities and develop a great product. So a large part of my job involves diplomacy and leadership.”

Leadership for Change

Hudson says that the development of leadership skills is crucial in education today. “Engineering students need to realize that being a bright, red-hot student is temporary. You have to think about how you are going to lead. Students are in training to be leaders, and they need to be developing those qualities. We

need great leaders out here. It takes time to develop and you have to work hard at it, because leadership is so precious.

“One of the greatest things we can do in education,” says Hudson, “is to train our replacements. As a leader, I try to be an individual of high integrity. I want people to know that what I am saying is right. People need to be able to count on leaders and trust in them. And they need to get the job done.”



- 2002 4th William E. Boeing Distinguished Lecturer, Purdue
 - 2002–2001– Major General, U.S. Air Force Director, Joint Strike Fighter Program
 - 2000– Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, St. Andrew’s Catholic Parish
 - 1999, 2001 Defense Distinguished Service Medal
 - 1999–2002 Brigadier General, U.S. Air Force; Deputy Director, Joint Strike Fighter Program (until 2001)
 - 1996–97 Director, Air Force F-15 Fighter Program
 - 1994–96 Director, Air Force/Navy T-6A Trainer Program
 - 1987–99 Air Force Staff and Dept. of Defense Staff, the Pentagon (1987–90, 1993–94, 1997–99)
 - 1987–91 Youth Sports Coach
 - 1986– Adult Leader, Boy Scouts of America
 - 1982–86 Air Force Test Pilot School and Test Pilot Duty
 - 1975–81 A-10 “Thunderbolt II” pilot and T-38 “Talon” Instructor
- BSAE '73, U.S. Air Force Academy; MSAE '74, Purdue; MA '91, U.S. Naval War College; MS, Management '93, Salve Regina University