Aviation Heritage Park – WKU Connections

VFTH

6/15/17

It’s been more than eight years since the dedication of Aviation Heritage Park here in Bowling Green.

The tribute to aviators from this area has WKU fingerprints all over it as Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the Hill.

WKU Alums have played a huge role in creating Aviation Heritage park. The latest acquisition to the park, a Huey Helicopter, will honor WKU Alum and Vietnam Veteran Ray Nutter.

“We’d been looking for a Huey for I can’t tell you how many years and we had a lot of dry holes.”

The years of searching finally paid off at an Air Force Base in Tuscon Arizona.

“160 was in the best shape.

A quick photo op with the aircraft before it was transported to Bowling Green shows the strong ties to WKU.

“The three that went out there were all graduates of WKU. Myself, Jerry Roark as well as Ray Buckberry. We took out a towel and lay over the pilot position where Ray Nutter flew when he flew the Huey.”

Colonel Ray Nutter, who graduated from WKU in 1953 and died in 2006 flew a Huey helicopter in Vietnam in 1965 and 1966.

“We knew a long time ago that Ray Nutter was one of the aviators that we wanted to tell his story. He has quite a story.”

Mike Nutter says his father didn’t talk much about his time in Vietnam.

“Dad was like a lot of veterans that had seen action and had experienced it, he wasn’t one to say a whole lot about what the true experiences were.”

Nutter says his dad would be excited to know the Huey will be displayed in Bowling Green which is where his young family lived while he was at war and where he retired a decade later.

“Both my parents are Western graduates. Our home has always been Bowling Green no matter where we were off to.”

Other veterans will also be singled out for being involved with this iconic helicopter that has such a rich history.

“We get so many inquiries about it. We have so many local connections with it.”

“Ray Nutter and I were classmates and it’s special to me to have this for him.”

The Huey will stay at the airport for this weekend’s hangar party before restoration begins. The newly restored Huey will be unveiled in a big celebration at next year’s Hangar party.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

####