



PHILIP SULLIVAN

Class of 1954

Philip Sullivan (1950 - 1954) was the first of three brothers who attended Sydney Technical High School. In 1959 he graduated in mechanical engineering from the University of New South Wales, earning the University Medal for standing first in his class.

After undertaking research in aeronautics for a master's degree at UNSW, in 1964 he completed a doctorate at the Department of Aeronautics, Imperial College, London. Following a postdoctoral year at Princeton University in the USA. In 1965 he joined the Institute for Aerospace Studies at the University of Toronto, Canada, where he has since remained, retiring as professor emeritus in 2003. In 1980 he was elected Fellow of the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute.

He pursued many research interests, and has published on diverse subjects, ranging from high Mach number flight through biological fluid flows to the philosophy of science. His work on the dynamics of air cushion vehicles earned him international recognition. Highlights of his career include participating in the rescue of Apollo 13 and in the development of an air cushion materials handling system now widely used in the North American automobile manufacturing industry.

For students seeking advice, his favourite aphorism is in a poem by the British poet Willard Austin: "Genius, that power which dazzles mortals' eyes, is oft but perseverance in disguise."