



Bruce MacDonald

Born: June 12, 1952

Family: Wife Cindy Mae

2 former wives Anne and Maryann

4 children, 2 adopted children, 6 stepchildren

23 grandchildren

Pilot

Gulf Air

Air BC

Inland Air (Prince Rupert)
(Owner)

Bruce's interest in flying started when he was 6 years old and his father bought an Aeronca Champ. In 1968, he left home, moved to the West coast and worked for a cable TV company. It was at the 1970 Abbotsford Airshow he resolved to fly for a living. His one ambition was to fly a Mallard for West Coast Air. His passion was partly fueled by reading *The Pathless Way* and it was a lifetime regret not to have known **Justin de Goutiere**. He started flying lessons the next day at Harrison Airways in Vancouver under the tutelage of Buzz Bivar CFI and soloed in Pitt Meadows with a grand total of 6.4 hours. He received his Commercial license in 1971.

Pilots' jobs were hard to find at this time and he took whatever he could get. In August he had an opportunity to return a Volmer Sportsman homebuilt amphibian to Grand Falls, Newfoundland. His partner, Deborah King, who accompanied him, was the first woman to fly floatplanes on the west coast. She flew for Island Air out of Thasis and was an excellent pilot. In those days a woman had to be twice as good as the guys to get a job flying at all.

Between 1972 and 1978, Bruce flew with Miksoo Aviation in Saskatchewan and Parsons Airways North in Pukatawagan, Manitoba, about 75 miles north of Flin Flon. In the middle of the winter, Glen Hogarth, the Chief Pilot, asked him if he was interested in flying an Otter. He jumped at the opportunity to go from a 185 on skis to an Otter on skis. He had never even been in a Beaver, which is the usual stepping stone to the Otter. He was posted to Lynn Lake where he spent three summers on contract in the Barrens during the Uranium exploration push.

In 1978 Bruce moved to **Gulf Air** in Campbell River BC. In the bush, he had a total of 2 days off one year and flew medevacs on both days. On the coast, he had regular days off. It was extremely busy up to 1981 when the bottom fell out of the logging industry. From 1981 to 1984 he flew out of Port Hardy working for Jim Pattison's **Air BC**.

From Port Hardy, Bruce went to the interior and worked different jobs and moved to Port McNeil in 1988 to fly for Orca Air until 1991 when he moved to Wagair Air as an Otter pilot. He was going through a difficult period personally at this time and Wagair gave him unending support. In 1992 they sent him to Prince Rupert as Base Manager. In 1995, after a couple of fatal accidents, Wag Air ceased operations and Bruce was hired by Inland Air Charters Ltd. He purchased the license and buildings from IAC in 2006. In 2008 he purchased operations in Queen Charlotte City from South Moresby Air in 2008, and Harbour Air's North Pacific Seaplanes in 2013. In 2016 Inland Air had its first and only accident. In 2024, Inland Air are restoring their company to pre COVID revenues and personnel and Bruce is in the process of selling it to his daughter Anne and son-in-law.

In his own words:

'I have retired fulltime after 53 years in the industry, doing some training to the young pilots we hire, mainly to pass on hard won skills and knowledge to an industry in decline. I have had a great career in aviation, I wouldn't change a thing, even the hard times. I was all worth it'.

