A businessman's best friend...

Florida businessman and corporate business jet user Cecil McKinney never travels without his very own medical advisor – three-year-old Fred, a certified medical alert service dog. The Yorkshire terrier travels with Cecil, who suffers from diabetes, wherever he goes, including business meetings, flights to Australia and even the NBAA convention.

Fred is trained to bark and alert Cecil 30 minutes before an episode, allowing him to raise his blood sugar levels.

Barrington, young man on a mission

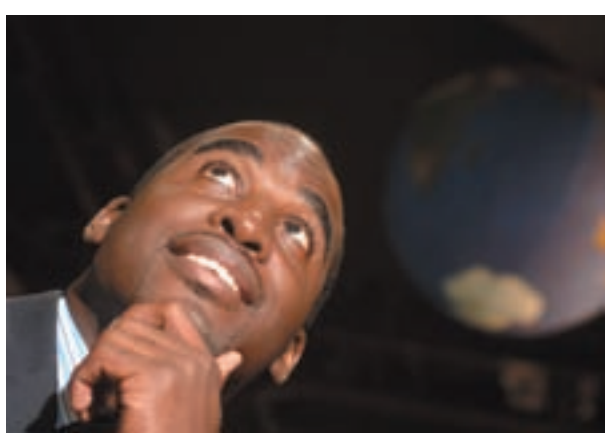
A large number of impressive people visit NBAA – but none more so than 22-year-old Barrington Irving, an aeronautical sciences student who possesses powers of persuasion that belie his youth.

An inner-city kid from Miami, Barrington met a United Airlines captain, got bitten by the aviation bug – and now owns the $600,000 Columbia 400 aircraft that he intends to fly on a record-setting around-the-world trip.

The journey started when Barrington, a high school football star, began to wash aircraft at the weekends for Miami Executive Aviation, a local FBO and now his title sponsor, to help him through school. "The meeting with the aviator was crucial as it made me realise I wanted a flying career," he says. A scholarship to Florida Memorial University followed, and this helped him get his licences.

"I soon started planning the round-the-world flight so that I could make a statement to other black kids from the inner cities, showing them how – with determination – it's possible to be successful, rather than getting into the downward spiral of crime and drugs."

Barrington has been working on the project for the past four-and-a-half years. He has already raised $700,000 toward the overall $1.05-million cost of the flight. That doesn't include the cost of the aircraft – he financed that by persuading OEMs to sponsor the cost of individual components.



Barrington Irving ponders the magnitude of his flight on Universal Weather's stand. The company will provide flight planning for the record attempt.

Assuming he achieves his goals, the flight will begin in Miami in April 2007 and end 45 days and 23,000nm (42,500km) later. Says Barrington: "When we arrive back in Miami, I will be the youngest person ever to fly solo around the world – and also the first Afro-American to achieve the feat.

"But I'm not doing it for myself. I just want to show disadvantaged kids that they can drag themselves out of the inner cities as I've done."

Other major sponsors for the flight include Chevron, Universal Weather (flight planning), Continental Motors (the Columbia 400 has a TS10-550 engine), and Avidyne.

To help Barrington, contact him through www.experienceaviation.org or at birving@miamiexecutive.com.

A man with a mission

Giuseppe Orsi is overseeing some of the most exciting program developments AgustaWestland has witnessed. Liz Moscrop takes a look at some of his achievements.

AgustaWestland is going from strength to strength. AW139 sales have reached almost 200, making it the best-selling helicopter in its class and the Grand, launched in July 2004, has grabbed more than 100 sales in just over two years. The company has delivered nearly 50 AW139 helicopters, including several in North America, for corporate and offshore transport. It also boasts the widest range of corporate helicopters in the business, from the eight-seat single-engined A119 Koala to the 16t three-engined EH101, a version of which was selected last year as the new US presidential helicopter.

Since becoming chief executive in November 2004, Giuseppe Orsi has placed a strong focus on North America. Last November the company broke ground on a second assembly

line at its Philadelphia plant for the AW139. The A119 Koala is also exclusively built in Philadelphia as around 70% of its market lies in the USA. The Philadelphia assembly line has expanded the company's capabilities and is designed to satisfy demand from a strengthening North American market.

The 110,000ft^2 (10,219m^2) facility includes hangars, completion and final assembly areas, manufacturing stations and avionics assembly along with warehouse and office space. The project will require over $27 million in investment and create 150 jobs, doubling the existing workforce.

Orsi has presided over strong sales of the company's range of corporate helicopters in North and South America this year. In summer AgustaWestland signed an agreement with Mexican distributor Aerolineas Ejecutivas for five helicopters plus 37 options, following a sale in July to Synergy Aerospace in Brazil for six helicopters and 56 options. The company's light twins are the leaders in the Brazilian helicopter market with 35 helicopters now in service, representing a market share of over 60% of the light twin fleet.

FACE THE FACTS WITH...

ALAIN BELLEMARE

With one very light jet engine coming off its Montreal production line every 8h, Pratt & Whitney Canada is confident it can cope if air-taxi demand skyrockets. P&WC president Alain Bellemare tells Brendan Gallaher the company is looking to pull out of the hat a low-end turboprop and a 10,000lb-thrust engine for big business jets

Have you hit your "8h engine" target for the PW600-family VLJ engine program?
There's a bit of fine-tuning still to do, but all in all, we're there. It was a goal we set ourselves early in the program and we're pretty proud to have achieved it.

What's the current status of the PW600 family?
We're on three platforms – the Eclipse 500, Cessna Citation Mustang and Embraer Phenom 100 – and we have two engines certificated and in production. The PW610 for the Eclipse 500 was type-certificated in August and the PW615 for the Mustang received FAA certification five weeks ago. We see PW617 certification around 12 months from now.

What are your latest PW600 production projections?
We're fully geared up to produce over 2,000 engines a year, and we think that should be sufficient. But if it turns out that we need more, we have in place a plan that would allow us to boost our current capacity within eight to 10 months of making the decision.

Will you have any people close to the first air-taxi operations to see how your engines hold up and learn any lessons?
We've had people working with DayJet, Pogo and others for a few years now, helping them on things like logistics and maintenance requirements. Now they're nearly ready to enter service, and when they do we'll have dedicated resources supporting them day in, day out.

What have you been talking about lately with your air-taxi customers?
One major topic is logistics. For example, we aim to respond very fast to AOG [aircraft on ground] requests. So we developed a process for entry into service that has allowed us to simulate AOGs with our accessory suppliers to make sure they have the right level of support in place. We've also simulated the aftermarket flow though our shops. All that planning's in place and ready to be launched when the field wants it. We also have some very aggressive AOG response-time targets – they already meet customer requirements pretty much across the board, and we're planning to do even better.

What's the status of the PW535E for the Embraer Phenom 300 light jet?
We're aiming for certification in mid-2008 so that the aircraft can enter service a year later. Our work with Embraer on the control system and the nacelle is on schedule and we're scheduling a first ground run early next year, with first tests in our flying testbed following immediately afterwards.

Are you any closer to finding an application for the PW800?
We've been working on the PW800/Advanced Turbofan Integrator (ATFI) program for a few years now and we see it as a step on the way to a brand-new engine in the 10,000lb class. The strategy has been to demonstrate the technology first, then get closer to what our customers want, and finally secure one or two platforms to officially launch the program. A launch platform is closer than it has ever been, I believe, and I expect it to come from the business aircraft market rather than the regional jets.

How much more do you hope to get out of the ageless PT6?
Every time we're asked to look at doing something new in the PT6's performance class we find that we can always meet the requirement by improving what we have already. Just look at the Piaggio Avanti II and the EADS-Socata TBM, for which we're providing the PT6A-66B and –66D. But it's also true that people are asking what's next, so we have an advanced engineering group looking at concepts for new turboprops from 300-400shp [225-300kW] all the way up to 1,500shp.

We're more focused on the lower end of the range because we've had many requests from OEMs to come up with a smaller turboprop. Potential applications are airframes currently powered by piston engines in the same horsepower range, four-seat GA tourers and the like. There's still some more work to be done, mainly on cost, but we do believe there's a market demand.

Which of your executive helicopter engines would you highlight?
The PW210, which has been selected to power the Sikorsky S-76D and re-engine earlier S-76s. We are also working with other rotary-wing manufacturers with a view to putting it in new designs – we hope to be able to say more at the Helicopter Association International show in February.