A donor provided office space in downtown Seattle, and Lovering hired two part-time assistants. The small but determined staff made progress, upgraded PNAHF’s small initial aviation museum at the Seattle Center, organized outreach programs, and persevered in the mission for a flight museum. Each accomplished step of the journey created momentum for the next, and it was a long climb.

A pivotal moment in the development of the new museum happened in 1978. As the Boeing Red Barn languished, and with the museum’s presence at Seattle Center coming to a close, it was clear that the museum required land, and the audacious ask was for seven prime acres on Boeing Field.

The expected response was push-back from airfield management, in addition to legal woes as eminent domain action was required to acquire the necessary private parcels. Lovering answered the subpoena to represent the museum in court, sans attorney. It was a surprise that the judge ruled in favor of the land for public use, with the museum included as an airport-related activity.

This was not the end of the struggle, but it was a turning point. With the prime property, the Red Barn was restored with growing conviction that an aerospace museum should educate and his influence to explore the museum’s potential. In 1975, Howard Lovering was assigned as a Boeing loaned executive to complete a study of the project. Completed on a tight schedule, the assessment found that a museum was feasible and of consequence as an educational center, only if located at Boeing Field. This early work committed what was to become the mission for the institution.

Continuing to serve on the Museum’s Board of Trustees and as a volunteer, Lovering assisted the effort to save the original manufacturing building, the Boeing Red Barn, and relocate it to temporary storage at Boeing Field. Recruited by Bill Allen, Lovering then took leave of absence from the company to serve as the first executive director and staff of one for The Museum of Flight. Leaving the Museum in 1992, Lovering and his wife established LOGIC, a museum consulting company, with their first assignment to manage the acquisition and move of the Spruce Goose from California to Oregon. For three decades, LOGIC has assisted cultural, historical and transportation projects around the country in realizing their missions. Lovering recently authored For Future Generations/A History of The Museum of Flight that was awarded an International Silver Medal (IPPY) from the Independent Publishers association.

Howard Lovering is a true Pathfinder. Without his tenacity and steadfastness, the incredible story of The Museum of Flight would likely be much different.

Written by Alison Bailey, Associate Director of Development