



Globetrek was founded in 1972 by William C. Hutchinson. As a very young boy, his bedroom walls papered with world maps, Billy Hutchinson began to dream of seeing faraway places. His father had already spent several years in India & Burma, overseeing Citgo's oil well development. Later, as Lieutenant William C. Hutchinson in the 1950s, aboard the U.S.S. Washburn stationed in San Diego and during his Washington, D.C. stint as a Naval Intelligence Officer, he clung to his dream of distant travel. In the 1960s while representing an international mining equipment company with home offices in Pittsburgh, Bill traveled extensively throughout South America prior to setting up and heading a Peruvian subsidiary of that company in Lima, Peru, his family's home and base of operations for thirteen years.

Following the Peruvian military revolt & political shift in 1970, with foreign nationals no longer welcome in the business arena, Bill decided to move his family to Lake Charles, Louisiana, where he found suitable land, constructed a building at 226 West Prien Lake Road, and in 1972 opened a travel agency in that building. Then it was office walls that were papered with world maps.

In order to operate the travel agency, Bill hired Helen Donlan, a qualified agent and former manager of the international travel desk at a major New Orleans agency, whose ICTA & TAP Certifications as well as her vast experience would satisfy IATA, IATAN, ARC and other regulatory requirements. Soon thereafter, Helen's daughter, Maureen, came aboard. That mother-daughter team, working with Bill for a combined total of close to 25 years, and Helen's youngest daughter Erin, established Globetrek as the premier agency in Southwest Louisiana. Cookie Boullion, a strong presence in Globetrek's formation, also arrived in the early years, working for Bill as a specialty agent, and remains on Globetrek's current roster of travel experts.

Bill rented space in the building to others while growing the travel business, gradually taking over all but a small office unit within a few years. Globetrek opened a branch in Sulphur with Maureen as manager, leased offsite space in the Calcasieu Marine National Bank tower in downtown Lake Charles, and forged a unique working relationship with the Ahrenkiel Shipping line, designating a Globetrek in-house agent dedicated to their travel needs.

During the 1970s Bill helped form the Pelican Ski Club, in which many southwest Louisianians enthusiastically participated, embarking on three or four annual trips to popular snow-skiing destinations. Globetrek was the travel agency of choice for the McNeese State University Athletic Department, Bill often traveling with the basketball team during the Joe Dumars era, and flew with the team to Hawaii one year for the pre-season Maui Classic Invitational Tournament. The 1980s & '90s reflected a wider interest in the cruise experience and the burgeoning phenomenon of affordable tropical packages. By that time Lake Charles had several travel agencies, most of which are no longer in existence, with Globetrek still recognized as the area's premier travel agency.

Both agents and customers consistently observed and commented on Bill's fairness & objectivity. His beloved fellow Rotarians considered him a man of integrity and they still speak highly of him today. He kept his high school friends for decades, meeting with them in regular reunions. A plain-talking Texan (who learned Spanish during graduate studies at the Thunderbird School of International Management in Phoenix), he believed in loyalty to family, friends and business acquaintances, truth overriding all other choices in any relationship. It was those qualities that Bill brought to Globetrek and shared with every employee, customer and vendor.

In August of 1994 Bill's picture was on the cover of "Travel Weekly" magazine during a struggling time for travel agencies, with dwindling airline commissions. The interview Bill gave emphasized the critical importance of "service to the customer" over that of agency commissions. The caption under his cover photo was simply, "On the Level." That so personified the man. Bill died several months later in April of 1995 and was buried at sea, with full color-guard honors, by the U.S. Navy off the coast of San Diego, California.

Years after Bill's passing, the agency, now 'GlobeTrek,' landed in the very capable hands of the present owner, James Halphen, a gentleman with passion for travel and a commitment to service.

Influenced by his family's French heritage, James longed to explore that heritage at its roots. In 1984, he enrolled in the American University in Paris, France. Attending university in France allowed James to do extensive traveling across Europe and Africa, experiencing multiple cultures and lands.

In May of 1987, James received a CPLF (Certificat Pratique de Langue Française) from the the Université de Paris-Sorbonne, Paris IV. In June of the same year, he was awarded an Associates Degree in Arts and a Bachelor's Degree in French Studies from the American University in Paris.

After completing his undergraduate degrees in Europe, James returned to the United States where he enrolled in graduate school at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. James completed his Master's Degree in Secondary Education and French Literature in May of 1994. While enrolled in graduate school James worked as a foreign language teacher in the public school system. It was during this stage that he was asked to serve as tour guide for inbound travelers to Louisiana by a local travel agency. This was the catalyst that launched him into the travel industry as an outside sales agent for over thirteen years.

In October of 2000, James left the public school system and worked as a staff development trainer for a local hospital. He still, however, continued to serve as an outside sales agent for his friend and mentor, Kermit U. Duhon, the owner of the Lafayette, LA based travel agency, Travel Machine, Inc.

In 2003 Mr. Duhon offered James the manager's position at his Lake Charles office, Travel Machine dba Globetrek Travel. After serving as manager for over two years James purchased Globetrek in May of 2006.

GlobeTrek's walls are still papered with world maps and GlobeTrek's commitment to service and excellence continue!

Special thanks go out to Mrs. Anne Hutchinson and her son David Hutchinson for contributing to the historical content of this document.