Steve Wozniak Biography
CSU-33012

Stephen Gary Wozniak is an American engineer, programmer and philanthropist. Born in 1950 he along with Steve Jobs founded Apple which went on to be the largest tech company in the world by revenue.

He primarily designed the Apple II, which was one of the first highly mass-produced micro-computer and had massive influence in the development of the original Apple Macintosh.

After leaving apple in 1985, Wozniak founded his own company CL-9 and pursued several philanthropic and business ventures focusing largely on technology kindergarten-12th grade schools.

Early Life and Education

Stephen Gary Wozniak, born on August 11, 1950, in San Jose, California. Wozniak was the son of an engineer at Lockheed Martin and was fascinated by electronics at an early age. Although he was never a star student in the traditional sense, Wozniak had an aptitude for building working electronics from scratch.

Wozniak was expelled from university of Colorado Boulder in his first year for hacking the university computer system and sending prank messages on him. He eventually transferred to University of California at Berkeley where he designed and built his first computer.

During his brief stint at the University of California at Berkeley, Wozniak met Steve Jobs, who was still in high school, through a mutual friend. The two later paired up to form Apple Computer on April 1, 1976, prompting Wozniak to quit his job at Hewlett-Packard.

He has credited watching Star Trek and attending conventions as a source of inspiration for starting Apple.

Apple Career

Before focusing his attention on Apple, Wozniak was employed at Hewlett-Packard, where he designed calculators. It was during this time he befriended Steve jobs and dropped out of UC Berkeley

In 1975, Wozniak began designing and developing the computer that would eventually make him famous, the Apple I. On June 29 of that year, he tested his first working prototype, displaying a few letters and running sample programs.

After the success of the Apple I, Wozniak designed the Apple II, the first personal computer with the ability to display colour graphics, and BASIC programming language built in. Inspired by the technique Atari used to simulate colours on its first arcade games, Wozniak found a way of putting colours into the NTSC system by using a US$1 chip.

Even with the success he had helped to create at Apple, Wozniak believed that the company was hindering him from being who he wanted to be. He enjoyed engineering, not management, and said that he missed "the fun of the early days". As other talented engineers joined the growing company, he no longer believed he was needed there, and by early 1985, Wozniak left Apple, stating that the company had "been going in the wrong direction for the last five years".

Later Career

In February 1981, Wozniak was injured when the private plane he was piloting crashed while taking off from the Santa Cruz Sky Park. His painstaking recovery lasted two years, as he suffered from a variety of injuries and amnesia.

Following his accident and subsequent recovery, Wozniak went on to found numerous ventures, including CL 9, the company responsible for the first programmable universal remote control.

Called one of "Silicon Valley's most creative engineers," in 1990, he joined Mitchell Kapoor in establishing the Electronic Frontier Foundation, an organization that provides legal aid for computer hackers facing criminal prosecution. Wozniak also founded Wheels of Zeus (Woz) in 2002, a venture started with the aim of developing wireless GPS technology.

Personal Life and Philanthropy

1990, Wozniak helped found the Electronic frontier foundation, providing some of the organization's initial funding and serving on its founding Board of Directors. He is the founding sponsor of the Tech museum, Silicon Valley Ballet and Children's Discovery museum of San Jose. Also since leaving Apple, Wozniak has provided all the money, and much onsite technical support, for the technology program in his local school district in Los Gatos.

Wozniak is married to Janet Hill, an Apple education development executive.

Trivia

Wozniak has been awarded a total of 11 Honorary Doctor of Engineering Degrees.
A street in San Jose, California, is named Woz Way in his honour, thanks to his contribution to the Children's Discovery Museum located there.
He has made several cameos in TV shows like The Big Bang Theory and Hackers Wanted
He was played by Josh Gad and Seth Rogen in two different Hollywood productions about Steve jobs.

Summary

Called the pioneer of the personal computer revolution, Steve Wozniak has been one of the most brightest software engineers of his time and his contribution to apple has been paramount for their success.

References

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