

## Son Of Ex-McDonnell Douglas CEO Sues Boeing

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A member of the St. Louis family that ran McDonnell Douglas is suing Boeing Co., which bought the aerospace company in 1997, alleging Boeing infringed on his patents for an unmanned drone landing system.

William "Randy" McDonnell is seeking \$160 million in damages from Boeing and Insitu, Boeing's Washington state subsidiary, over patents related to an unmanned aerial vehicle landing system, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported Tuesday (<http://bit.ly/x8EGjb> [1] ).

Boeing, based in Chicago, denied the allegations and said it will fight the lawsuit.

"We believe our products don't infringe on the patents in question and believe the court will agree with us," said company spokesman John Dern.

Randy McDonnell is an aeronautical engineer and son of Sanford McDonnell, who was chairman and chief executive of McDonnell Douglas from 1972 to 1988. He is also the cousin of John McDonnell, who was the McDonnell Douglas chairman and CEO who guided the corporation through its merger with Boeing and who still holds a seat on Boeing's board of directors.

The suit, filed Thursday in U.S. District Court in St. Louis by Advanced Aerospace Technologies Inc., which is owned by Randy McDonnell, claims Boeing and Insitu knowingly encroached the patent McDonnell obtained for a "skyhook retrieval system" that enables drones to set down without a runway.

The suit says the technology is similar to the tail-hook mechanism that grabs incoming manned jets on the decks of aircraft carriers. It claims that Randy McDonnell invented the process in the capacity of president and sole owner of Advanced Aerospace. He founded the firm in St. Louis County prior to the Boeing merger and continues to operate it.

"I am greatly disappointed that Insitu, and then Boeing, declined to pay the compensation due for their use of my inventions and that I now must resort to court action," McDonnell said in a statement issued through his attorney.

McDonnell filed a companion lawsuit in Washington, D.C., asking the federal government to reimburse McDonnell for profits Insitu and Boeing earned as independent contractors operating drones on behalf of the U.S. military.

Randy McDonnell contends he came up with the engineering designs in the 1990s. Patents owned by his company were issued in 2005 and 2006. The suits claim that he shared details of the design in 2000 after learning that Insitu had encountered "difficulties" with its own retrieval system. At the time, the patent was pending.

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Insitu produces the Boeing ScanEagle, Integrator and other drones currently deployed by the U.S. and by military forces of Australia and Canada.

"Without advising Mr. McDonnell, Insitu misappropriated critical features of Mr. McDonnell's UAV retrieval solution ... for use on the Insitu (unmanned aircraft systems)," the suit alleges.

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