

## Press Release

For Immediate Release

For more information contact:

Linda Kaplan 602-370-2924

Lon Safko - Mobile: 480-266-1200 or Office: 480-507-9900

September 2, 2005

### **SMITHONIAN INSTITUTION ACCEPTS ARIZONA TECHNOLOGY COMPANY INTO PERMANENT COLLECTION.**

**Craig Orr, Senior Associate Curator and Archivist for the Museum is coming to Phoenix on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> to gather materials for the collection.**

Phoenix, AZ ...Safko International, Inc. a company that came to Arizona as a two-man team, working out of a garage grew to more than 25 offices around the country as well as Sweden and England in the Arizona technology environment from 1985-1996. Lon S. Safko, CEO of the now inactive corporation is a computer software developer and entrepreneur and co-founder of the 5.4 billion dollar assistive technology industry for the disabled.

The Smithsonian Institution is acquiring the SenSei and SoftVoice prototypes and original equipment for the disabled which will become part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polio Vaccine exhibit tracing American heritage through exhibitions of social, cultural, scientific and technological history and then become part of the permanent revolving display of the National Museum of American History Division of Information Technology and Communications

According to Dr. David Allison of the Museum, "The Smithsonian's computer collection already includes many objects that document the early evolution of personal computers and their social significance. Until now, however, we have not had the opportunity to collect much in the area of early efforts to adapt computers for use by people with disabilities. This accession is an important step in that direction."

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The equipment being donated includes:

- The voice-activated control system for the first Apple IIe and the first voice recognition board ever created.
- A server system that could control a range of devices designed for the disabled, such as a HeadMouse, modified trackball, telephone controller, TV controller, and sip and puff switches.
- Environmental control unit...which allowed the disabled to adjust their lights, appliances, beds, heating and air conditioning, television, or even activate a private security system, just by clicking on a picture. With the word processor, users could write letters, reports, or newsletters with on screen keyboard.

“We believe that documenting how computer technology can be modified for use by the disabled population is an important topic we should cover. This collection of devices from early in the history of personal computers shows what was possible in that era, and gives an intriguing perspective on the issues involved in bringing technology for the disabled to market,” said Allison in a letter to the committee.

In addition, the Smithsonian is interested in Safko’s corporate records documenting an entrepreneurial company from inception, through all the creative and growth processes. More about the equipment can be found [www.LonSafko.com](http://www.LonSafko.com) which has all of the photos of the inventions going to the Smithsonian at the bottom of the page under the link “Smithsonian Institute”.

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