Micron Chief Executive Officer **Steve Appleton** crashed and died while attempting to fly an experimental plane in Boise, Idaho. Appleton took charge of Micron at age 34 and was the memory chip industry's longest-serving CEO.



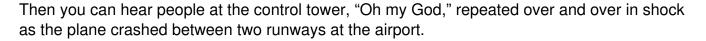
Appleton's aircraft crashed early Friday morning, shortly after his second takeoff of the day. The Lancair IVP aircraft departed first at 8:46 am, only to land after lifting off only 5-10 feet from the runway.

He flew again in a second try, but had to call in a request to land again, indicating an aircraft problem.

"I'm going to taxi back in and see if I can figure it out," can be heard on a recording of Boise airport's air-traffic control conversations. "I'd like to turn back in and land," he said. "Coming back in."

## **Experimental Plane Crash: Micron CEO Dead at 51**

Written by Bob Snyder 04 February 2012



When only 22 years old, Appleton joined Micron, working at first for the factory's night shift.

Micron is now the last-standing American maker of DRAM, an industry segment known for its volatility. It takes a strong stomach to run a memory company and Micron found their "Iron Man" in Steve Appleton. His competitive nature won him fame when he won a power struggle with Micron's board. They fired him but were forced to recapitulate, hiring him back 8 days later.

"The things that I do outside of work are why I've been successful inside that industry," Appleton once claimed in an interview. "When you look at airplanes and cars and motorcycles and big-wave surfing and all of that stuff, those things reflect the same personality traits that make us successful as a company and make me successful."

Appleton, a product of an upbringing in a rough Los Angeles neighborhood, was a nationally ranked tennis player at Boise State University who learned to play left-handed after he broke his right wrist. Allegedly he slept just four hours a night, and worked out twice daily at 4 am and 9 pm.

Last year, Appleton was awarded the US Semiconductor Industry Association's **Robert N. Noyce Award** 

named after the inventor of the integrated circuit.

Micron says it has a "deep bench" of executive talent that will step up...but the company's hard-charging Pilot is now gone. RIP, Steve.

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