



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Donald Thomas to Receive the 2018 Brewer Trophy**

**Washington, D.C., October 5, 2018**– The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that former NASA astronaut Donald Thomas has been selected as the recipient of the 2018 Frank G. Brewer Trophy. The trophy was established in 1943 to honor “... significant contributions of enduring value to aerospace education in the United States.”

Thomas is being recognized “... for his lifelong dedication to aerospace excellence, outreach, and education, as well as his passionate efforts in exciting and inspiring our next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers by sharing his spaceflight adventures and knowledge.”

During his 17 years as an astronaut, Thomas was thoroughly involved with educational programs for NASA, regularly visiting schools and community groups across the country and around the world, sharing his experiences from his space shuttle missions with young students and diverse audiences. Recognizing how few people have had the opportunity to fly in space, he has always felt a strong sense of responsibility to share his experience and to educate others about the excitement of space travel.

Thomas departed NASA in 2007 and began a new mission at Towson University, where he worked until 2015 as an Adjunct Associate Professor of Physics and served as the founding director of the Hackerman Academy of Mathematics and Science, a STEM outreach initiative designed to get young students interested in future careers in math, science, and engineering. Another major component of Thomas’ outreach activities were his Saturday Morning Science programs. Every other Saturday during the school year, Thomas coordinated programs and invited speakers from a wide range of disciplines to give presentations to students about their careers and other STEM topics.

During his tenure at Towson University, Thomas visited over 300 public and private schools in the greater Baltimore and Washington D.C. area to help inspire and engage students. He also presented his programs to over 80,000 at-risk, low income students, in both inner city and rural communities. In 2013, Towson University awarded Thomas with the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction in part because of his work with Title I students.

In addition to his programs for young students, Thomas has participated in almost 40 teacher professional development workshops, hosted programs for National Aviation Day, served as regular speaker at the USA Science and Engineering Festival, developed and initiated virtual classroom visits for schools in the U.S. and abroad, led programs at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, served on the Governor's STEM Task Force in Maryland, and published a book titled *Orbit of Discovery*.

"After leaving the Astronaut Corp in 2007, I was lucky to find another passion in education similar to what I have always had for space," said Thomas. "I am hopeful that some of the students I meet will be inspired to follow in my footsteps as we prepare for our future missions to Mars. I am truly honored by this award."

"Given Dr. Thomas's consequential career, one would excuse him wanting to dial it back. But he has directed his entire passion into educating aviation's next generation, wherever they might reside," said NAA President & CEO, Greg Principato. "What others talk about, Dr. Thomas lives. He is a most worthy recipient of the Brewer Trophy and I look forward to presenting it to him."

Serving on the 2018 Brewer Trophy selection committee were:

- Frank Brewer, The Brewer Family
- Robert Brewer, The Brewer Family
- Bob Stangarone, NAA Board of Directors
- Yvette Rose, Cargo Airline Association, Aero Club Foundation
- Phil Woodruff, 2003 Brewer Trophy Recipient

The Brewer Trophy will be presented at a date and location to be determined. For more information or to view a complete list of previous recipients, please visit [www.naa.aero](http://www.naa.aero).

***The National Aeronautic Association is a non-profit membership organization devoted to fostering opportunities to participate fully in aviation activities and to promoting public understanding of the importance of aviation and space flight to the United States. NAA is the caretaker of some of the most important aviation awards in the world, and certifies all aviation records set in the United States. For information, visit [www.naa.aero](http://www.naa.aero).***

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