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Patricia Pearce to Receive 2015 Katharine Wright Trophy

Washington, DC, July 28, 2015 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is proud to announce that Patricia Pearce, Deputy Chief of the High Speed Systems Division at the Air Force Research Laboratory, has been selected as the recipient of the 2015 Katharine Wright Trophy. The trophy was established in 1981 and is awarded annually to a woman who “...has contributed to the success of others, or made a personal contribution to the advancement of the art, sport, and science of aviation and space flight over an extended period of time.”

Ms. Pearce is being recognized for “...dedicating over 28 years to advancing the state of the art in hypersonic propulsion systems and aerospace system fueling technology in addition to serving as a mentor for female engineers and students pursuing careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) .”

As Deputy of the High Speed Systems Division, Ms. Pearce is the top female Scientist and Engineer (S&E) within AFRL’s Aerospace System Directorate. With Ms. Pearce’s leadership, the Air Force successfully demonstrated the world’s first scramjet-powered vehicle, earning national and worldwide acclaim.

Her influence on aviation fuels continues to have a global impact. She wrote and coordinated standards for aviation fuels for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), became the first female Head of Delegation for any country in NATO’s Fuels and Lubricants Working Group, and was named the Committee Chair for the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International Committee on Petroleum Products and Lubricants.

Ms. Pearce fully embraces her responsibility as a role model for young female engineers and students interested in STEM careers. She currently has personal mentoring relationships with three junior female S&Es within the AFRL, guides disadvantaged high school students who are interested in attending college by helping them obtain educational scholarships in STEM career fields, and mentors high school science fair students.

The Katharine Wright Trophy Selection Committee consisted of Elizabeth Matarese, Secretary of the NAA Board of Directors; Jonathan Gaffney, NAA President and CEO; Judith Bruner, Director of Safety and Mission Assurance at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and Katharine Wright Trophy Recipient (2014); Jan McKenzie, President Elect of the Ninety Nines; Pat Prentiss, Former President of the Ninety Nines; and Pat Theberge, member of the Ninety Nines.

The Katharine Wright Trophy will be presented at the NAA Fall Awards Ceremony 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.

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 world and national aviation records set in the United States. For information, visit www.naa.aero.

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