



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stephanie Berry
703-416-4888 Ext 104
awards-events@naa.aero

Pat Blum to Receive the 2016 Katharine Wright Trophy

Washington, DC, April 5, 2016 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is proud to announce that Pat Blum, founder of the Corporate Angel Network (CAN), has been selected as the recipient of the 2016 Katharine Wright Trophy. The trophy was established in 1981 and is awarded annually to an individual 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. Blum is being recognized for “... her dedication to establishing and developing the Corporate Angel Network, a public benefit aviation charity which coordinates, manages, and arranges free air travel on business jets for cancer patients who need transportation to and from their specialized life-saving treatment centers.”

Ms. Blum and her associate, Jay Weinberg, founded CAN in 1981. As cancer survivors who both personally experienced the extreme hardships and rigors of long distance travel to treatment centers, Ms. Blum and Mr. Weinberg envisioned the ability for cancer patients to fly at no charge, in a private, comfortable, and dignified environment, through the generosity of American corporations that operated business jets.

The pair called on corporate flight departments country-wide, reached out to cancer treatment hospitals across the nation, consulted with oncologists, worked with hotels and organizations such as the Ronald McDonald House, obtained fuel and airline discounts, initiated fundraising programs, and wrote grant applications. They also created the CAN volunteer corps comprised of 40 to 60 volunteers who managed calls from patients, confirmed physicians travel approvals, and made flight reservations with a growing number of corporations in order to fulfill each and every patient flight request.

The first CAN flight took place on December 22, 1981, in Safe Flight Instrument Corporation’s King Air. In 1982, CAN logged 23 cancer patient flights and by 1987 they celebrated their 650th completed flight. In April 2016, CAN marked their 50,000th completed cancer patient flight - truly a remarkable feat.

Ms. Blum retired from CAN at the age of 80, but her idea and vision continues over three decades after the first flight. Her dream of utilizing business aviation to help bring thousands of cancer patients closer to their life-saving cures has been a powerful aviation success story.

The Katharine Wright Trophy Selection Committee consisted of Elizabeth Matarese, Secretary of the NAA Board of Directors; Steve Champness, NAA Board of Directors; Pete Dumont, NAA Board of Directors; Karen Gebhart, NAA Board of Directors; Dick Koenig, NAA Board of Directors; Bob Stangarone, NAA Board of Directors; Judith Bruner, Director of Safety and Mission Assurance at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and Katharine Wright Trophy Recipient (2014); Patricia Pearce, Deputy Chief of the High Speed Systems Division, Air Force Research Laboratory and Katharine Wright Trophy Recipient (2015); Susan Walsh, Pratt & Whitney; Martha Phillips, President of the Ninety Nines; Pat Prentiss, Former President of the Ninety Nines; and Jonathan Gaffney, NAA President and CEO;

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.

#####