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Major Chrystina Jones to Receive the 2017 Katharine Wright Trophy

Washington, DC, August 29, 2017 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is proud to announce that Major Chrystina Jones, a United States Air Force pilot, has been selected as the recipient of the 2017 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.”

Major Jones is being recognized for “... her commitment to encouraging women across the globe to pursue and succeed in aviation careers.”

After graduating from the United States Air Force Academy, where she majored in Political Science and minored in Arabic, Major Jones completed pilot training and was qualified as a C-130 pilot. While deployed in Iraq, she was inspired to help the women of Iraq by encouraging them to become leaders in the field she knew best – aviation. At Joint Base Balad, Major Jones attended Arabic courses to improve her language skills in order to better communicate with and learn from the Iraqi women. In 2010, Major Jones founded the Horizon East chapter of Women in Aviation International (WAI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the encouragement and advancement of women in all aviation career fields and interests.

As the Horizon East chapter grew and the concept of Iraqi women in aviation gained momentum, Major Jones partnered with the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad to host a reception for their WAI chapter to outline increasing opportunities for women in the field of aviation. Iraqi women traveled from across the country to attend this unprecedented event, where they learned how to make a career as a pilot, in air traffic control, or in airport management. The event was broadcast internationally and the woman who attended became powerful role models for their communities.

While stationed in Yokota Air Base in Japan, Major Jones volunteered to head up Women's History Month at the base. She transformed this typically small-scale event by sending an invitation to Caroline Kennedy, Ambassador to Japan, to speak at the Women's History Month luncheon. Ambassador Kennedy accepted the invitation and addressed 322 personnel and senior U.S. and Japanese leadership on women's issues. At the request of Ambassador Kennedy, Major Jones personally drafted her message, which was broadcast out over international media to hundreds of thousands of people. With the added momentum, Major Jones spearheaded a bilateral women's career fair as part of the Women's History Month program. She organized over 30 professional fields, which showcased women's increasing opportunities to the 550 American and Japanese students that attended the event. As the base lead on Women's History Month, Major Jones led an aggressive bilateral program with Japanese allies, set a record attendance of over 1,200 personnel at the events, and challenged Japanese and U.S. senior military and diplomatic leaders to break down the last remaining gender barriers in aviation.

Major Jones is currently serving at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, Kansas. In her short time at this assignment, she joined the existing local Women in Aviation Chapter, serving as a Board Member and Outreach Chair. In this role, she co-hosted a Girl's in Aviation Day, where 25 young women received exposure to flight simulators and various aircraft. In March of 2017, Major Jones lead the charge for another Women's History Month STEM rally and is currently organizing a Girls in Aviation Day scheduled to take place in September 2017.

"Major Jones has clearly achieved great things, while at the same time investing much time and effort into making those around her better," stated NAA President & CEO, Greg Principato. "She is exactly the kind of aviation leader this award is designed to recognize."

Members of the Katharine Wright Trophy Selection Committee included: Pat Blum, Co-Founder of the Corporate Angel Network and Katharine Wright Trophy Recipient (2016); Cassandra Bosco, Director of Education and Industry Relations, Women in Aviation International; Frances Luckhart, The Ninety Nines; Dr. Samantha Magill, Special Projects, Honda Aircraft Company and NAA Board of Directors; Ivy McIver, Director, SR Product Line, Cirrus Aircraft; Patricia Pearce, Deputy Chief, High Speed Systems Division, Air Force Research Laboratory and Katharine Wright Trophy Recipient (2015); Pat Prentiss, Former President of the Ninety Nines and NAA Board of Directors; and John Thackrah, Vice President, Washington Operations, Pratt & Whitney, and NAA Board of Directors.

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

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