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DR. ELLEN OCHOA SELECTED AS RECIPIENT OF THE 2020 STINSON TROPHY

Washington, DC, February 2, 2021 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that Dr. Ellen Ochoa has been named the recipient of the 2020 Katherine and Marjorie Stinson Trophy.

The Stinson Trophy was created in 1997 by NAA to honor the accomplishments of two sisters - Katherine and Marjorie Stinson. These sisters were among the first 11 American women to be certified as airplane pilots through the Aero Club of America (the predecessor of NAA). Their flying school helped numerous U.S. and foreign pilots to earn their Aero Club licenses, the precursor to FAA pilot certificates. The trophy recognizes a living person for "...an outstanding and enduring contribution to the role of women in the field of aviation, aeronautics, space, or related sciences."

Ochoa is being recognized for "... her barrier-breaking career contributions as an engineer, astronaut, first Hispanic woman in space, and former Director of NASA's Johnson Space Center, in addition to her passionate advocacy for women and minorities in aeronautics, aviation, and space sciences."

After serving as a research engineer at Sandia National Laboratories and the NASA Ames Research Center, Ochoa was selected for astronaut training at NASA in 1990. She went on to become the first Hispanic woman to go to space, completing four shuttle missions and logging more than 900 hours in space throughout the 1990's and early 2000's.

In addition to her time in space, Ochoa led numerous teams assisting space flight from the ground, including the Flight Crew Operations Directorate, which managed the astronaut office and the aircraft operations divisions. She was Deputy Director of this division at the time of the loss of the Columbia Shuttle and crew in 2003 and had the difficult task of helping to implement changes needed to avoid a similar disaster in the future.

In 2007 she became Deputy Center Director of NASA's Johnson Space Center, which leads the human space flight enterprise for the nation. She served in that role for six years before becoming the first Hispanic Director and second woman Director of the center. As Director, Ochoa helped maximize use of the International Space Station and develop the Orion spacecraft for future missions, such as taking humans into deep space.

Ochoa retired from federal service in 2018 after 30 years at NASA. However, she continues to serve the nation, including in her role as a member of the National Science Board (NSB), which establishes the policies of the National Science Foundation (NSF) within the framework of applicable national policies set forth by the President and the Congress, and serves as an advisory body to Congress and the President on policy matters related to science, engineering, and education. Ochoa was appointed to the NSB by the President of the United States in 2016 to serve a six-year term. In 2018 she was elected by her peers to serve as the NSB Vice Chair and in 2020 elected to lead the NSB as the Chair.

As the first Hispanic female astronaut, Ochoa has given more than 300 presentations focusing on the importance of education in STEM topics. She has six schools named after her and several books written about her for students in the K-8 grades. Her life and accomplishments have been profiled in textbooks and on educational websites geared toward encouraging women and minorities to pursue careers in science, engineering, and technology. Ochoa's reputation is that of a tireless advocate of science and STEM education, always willing to step up to share her experiences and deliver words of inspiration in support of science and engineering.

“Katherine and Marjorie Stinson were true pioneers, whose contributions to aviation went beyond their feats in the cockpit,” said NAA President Greg Principato. “Dr. Ellen Ochoa embodies the spirit and inspiration that underlay this wonderful award. Her work and example reach and inspire thousands and will continue to do so for years to come. The National Aeronautic Association looks forward to presenting this award to Dr. Ochoa just as soon as health and safety protocols allow.”

“It’s such an honor to be recognized by NAA and particularly for an award named after two pioneering women,” stated Ochoa. “The Stinsons and other groundbreaking women in aviation and space paved the way for me to be able to contribute to the amazing endeavor of human space flight – and to inspire girls to reach for the stars.”

Members of the Selection Committee were Lt Col Dana Bochte, 2018 Stinson Trophy Recipient; Dick Koenig, NAA Board of Directors; Lt Col Christine Mau, 2016 Stinson Trophy Recipient; Candace McGraw, CEO, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport; Greg Pecoraro, President & CEO, National Association of State Aviation Officials; and Shelly Simi, 2019 Stinson Trophy Recipient.

The Stinson Trophy will be presented on a date and location to be determined. For more information, 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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