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

Burt Rutan Honored with 2015 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy

Washington, DC, October 5, 2015 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that Burt Rutan has been selected as the recipient of the 2015 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy.

Established by NAA in 1948 to honor the memory of Orville and Wilbur Wright, the trophy is awarded annually to a living American for “...significant public service of enduring value to aviation in the United States.”

Rutan is a world-renown aerospace engineer noted for his originality in designing light, strong, and energy-efficient aircraft. He designed the record-breaking Voyager, which was the first plane to fly around the world without stopping or refueling, and the sub-orbital spaceplane Spaceship One, which became the first privately funded spacecraft to enter the realm of space twice within a two-week period. Rutan also has five aircraft on display at the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC.

“For 40 years Burt has been one of the giants in aerospace development and engineering,” said Jim Albaugh, Chairman of NAA. “So much of his work has had an impact on aircraft design and performance, and he is very worthy of one of the most important awards in aviation.”

From 1965 to 1972, Rutan was a civilian flight test project engineer for the United States Air Force at Edwards Air Force Base. He left to become Director of Development of the BD-5 aircraft for Bede Aircraft, a position he held until 1974. Rutan then returned to California to create the Rutan Aircraft Factory, which designed and developed prototypes for several aircraft, mostly intended for amateur builders. In 1982, he founded Scaled Composites, LLC, which has become one of the world’s pre-eminent aircraft design and prototyping facilities. Rutan retired from Scaled Composites in 2011.

Rutan received the Presidential Citizen's Medal in 1986, was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in 1994, was named the recipient of the Charles A. Lindbergh Award in 2000, was listed as one of *Time Magazine's* "100 Most Influential People in the World" in 2004, received the National Academy of Sciences Award in Aeronautical Engineering in 2005, was recognized as a Living Legend of Aviation in 2011, was awarded the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum Trophy for Lifetime Achievement, and was ranked number 18 of *Flying* magazine's "51 Heroes of Aviation" list in 2013. He is also the recipient of two NAA Collier Trophies awarded in 1986 for the Rutan Voyager and in 2004 for SpaceShip One.

2015 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy Selection Committee Members:

- Jim Albaugh, Chairman, NAA
- Joe Anselmo, Editor-in-Chief, *Aviation Week*
- Mark Baker, President & CEO, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- Major General Charles Bolden, USMC (Ret.)
- Nick Calio, President & CEO, Airlines for America
- Robert Crandall, Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy Recipient, 2004
- Dr. Sandy Magnus, Executive Director, American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics
- Dave Melcher, President and CEO, Aerospace Industries Association
- Greg Principato, President, Aero Club of Washington
- Jonathan Gaffney, President & CEO, NAA; Chairman of the Selection Committee

Rutan will be presented the trophy at the Aero Club of Washington's Wright Memorial Dinner on Friday, December 11, 2015. For more information about the award or to view a list of past recipients, please visit www.naa.aero. For information regarding the Wright Memorial Dinner, please visit www.aeroclub.org.

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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