



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Colleen Barrett Honored with 2016 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy

Washington, DC, September 26, 2016 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that Colleen Barrett, President Emeritus, Southwest Airlines, has been selected as the recipient of the 2016 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.” One of the most important, historic, and visible aerospace awards in the world, the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy reflects a timeline of the most innovative inventors, explorers, industrialists, and public servants in aeronautics and astronautics.

Jim Albaugh, Chairman of NAA and a member of the Selection Committee, praised the choice. “Colleen Barrett is an industry veteran who can be credited with so much of the success of Southwest Airlines because of the company vision, values, and ideals she helped to create,” Albaugh said. “She is truly deserving of this great honor.”

Colleen Barrett, known as the “Queen of Hearts”, has had a career in aviation that has spanned nearly 50 years. She remains the only woman to serve as President of a major U.S. airline and has dedicated her life to the conception and retention of a unique corporate culture at Southwest Airlines.

After graduating from Becker Junior College in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1964, Barrett relocated to San Antonio, Texas, where she began working as a legal secretary for Herb Kelleher, an attorney and the co-founder of Southwest Airlines. She quickly became involved in the lengthy legal proceedings that eventually allowed the airline to take the skies in 1971.

Barrett formally joined Southwest Airlines in 1978 as Corporate Secretary to the Board of Directors. From there she held many titles including: Vice President of Administration from 1986

to 1990; Executive Vice President of Customers from 1990 to 2001; President and COO from 2001 to 2004; and President from 2004 to 2008.

As President of Southwest Airlines, Barrett oversaw the management and leadership of a variety of areas including human resources, customer relations, labor relations, marketing, and public affairs – all key ingredients to Southwest’s success. Barrett’s personal credo – “Follow the Golden Rule, learn from your mistakes, take the initiative, and listen to your heart,” has secured her position as one of the highest-ranking and most successful female executives in the history of the U.S. airline industry.

Barrett stepped down as Southwest’s President in July 2008. In 2010, she co-authored a book with Ken Blanchard titled Lead with LUV: A Different Way to Create Success, which draws on her leadership philosophy and personal experiences as a pioneer in the aviation industry.

2016 Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy Selection Committee Members:

- Jim Albaugh, Chairman, National Aeronautic Association
- Steven Udvar-Hazy, Wright Trophy Recipient, 2009
- The Honorable Marion Blakey, Wright Trophy Recipient, 2013
- Major General Charles Bolden, USMC, (Ret.)
- Ed Bolen, President and CEO, National Business Aviation Association
- Nick Calio, President and CEO, Airlines for America
- Bill Garvey, Aviation Week
- Margaret Jenny, President, Aero Club of Washington
- Dr. Sandy Magnus, Executive Director, American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics
- Dave Melcher, President and CEO, Aerospace Industries Association

Barrett will be presented the trophy at the Aero Club of Washington’s Wright Memorial Dinner on Friday, December 16, 2016. 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.

#####