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**DONNA SHIRLEY NAMED RECIPIENT OF
2009 KATHARINE WRIGHT AWARD**

Arlington, Virginia, June 30, 2009 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) announced that Donna Shirley will receive the 2009 NAA Katharine Wright Award. Shirley is being honored for her remarkable career as a pilot, NASA engineer, educator, and an inspiration to young women seeking engineering and technical careers.

The Katherine Wright Award is presented annually to a woman 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. The award was named in honor of Orville and Wilbur Wright's sister, Katharine who provided important financial, administrative, and technical support to the timeless achievement of her brothers.

Donna Shirley started flying lessons at the age of 15 and eventually a Commercial Pilot Certificate with Airplane, Single and Multi-engine Land and Seaplane Ratings and a Flight Instructor Certificate. Obtaining two degrees from the University of Oklahoma (including a bachelor's degree in aerospace/mechanical engineering) she commenced a 32-year career with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory which saw her grow from the only degreed female among 2,000 engineers to serving as the first woman to manage a NASA program as project manager of the Mariner 10 mission to Venus and Mercury. Later in her career she headed the team that built Sojourner, the Micro rover lander of the Mars Pathfinder Project which landed successfully on the surface of Mars in 1997. Throughout her career, Donna has spent considerable energy and time encouraging young girls toward a career in engineering and technical fields.

She went on to teach at Oklahoma University's College of Engineering and was awarded five honorary doctorates. She was named Woman of the Year by Glamour Magazine and MS Magazine. She served as a trustee for the Ninety-Nines Museum of Women Pilots and became the first director of the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame in Seattle. She also has received NASA's Outstanding Leadership Medal and the National Space Society's Wernher Von Braun Memorial Award.

The award will be presented at The Ninety-Nines Annual Convention this July in Chicago, Illinois.

The National Aeronautic Association is a non-profit, membership organization devoted to fostering America's aerospace leadership and promoting public understanding of the importance of aviation and space flight to the United States.

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