



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Aviation Volunteers Honored for Public Benefit Flying

Washington, D.C., September 20, 2019 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA), in partnership with the Air Care Alliance (ACA), a nationwide league of humanitarian flying organizations, is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2019 Public Benefit Flying Awards. These awards were created to honor volunteer pilots, other volunteers, and organizations engaged in flying to help others, as well as those supporting such work.

This year's recipients are:

Distinguished Volunteer Pilot:

Larry Forney's generosity as a volunteer pilot extends beyond the cockpit. He volunteers his time and professional expertise with Angel Flight South Central through public benefit flying and as Vice Chairperson on the Board of Directors. Forney provides operational and strategic consultation and fundraising support to help maintain the financial sustainability of the organization. His efforts are vital to the mission and success of Angel flight South Central.

Jim Hassenstab has been a volunteer pilot, board member, and fundraiser for Angel Flight Central for the past decade. During that time, he has flown 155 flights serving people in need. In March 2019, Hassenstab led Angel Flight Central's response effort to devastating flooding in Nebraska and Iowa. Over the course of three days, Angel Flight Central pilots flew 177 relief flights, delivering water and supplies to devastated areas as well as flying individuals out of harm's way.

Distinguished Volunteer:

Gene Pfautsch is Wings of Hope's longest-serving volunteer, having served the organization for 32 continuous years. Pfautsch led the human resources department for many years and was responsible for filling and managing Wings of Hope's many and varied volunteer roles. His responsibilities included recruiting, interviewing, onboarding,

and training volunteers. In the past year, Pfautsch vetted 105 people and 24 have become new volunteers.

Outstanding Achievement in Advancement of Public Benefit Flying:

After being wounded as a combat helicopter pilot in Vietnam and hospitalized over 700 miles away from home, Walt Fricke was inspired to create **Veterans Airlift Command (VAC)** in 2006 based on his personal experience and learning that today's wounded soldiers endure similar circumstances during their recovery. VAC is a network of business jet and private aircraft operators that transports wounded, post 9/11 veterans and their families, free of charge. Since its foundation, VAC has grown its volunteer base to over 2,600 aircraft owners and pilots, flying in excess of 17,000 veterans and their families to medical treatments, reunions, and military services.

Members of the 2019 Public Benefit Flying Selection Committee were Linda Daschle, President of LHD & Associates, Inc; Rick Durden, Air Care Alliance; and Merry Schroeder, 2018 Distinguished Pilot recipient.

The Public Benefit Flying Awards will be presented at NAA's Fall Awards Dinner on November 12, 2019 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. 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.

The Air Care Alliance is a nonprofit public service organization supporting the work of dozens of volunteer-based charitable organizations whose members fly to help others. ACA is devoted to fostering, enhancing, and promoting public benefit flying in the United States and other countries. For information, visit www.aircarealliance.org.

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