



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Jill R. Meyers to Receive the 2022 Katharine Wright Trophy

Washington, DC, May 16, 2022 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that Jill R. Meyers, a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society, has been selected as the recipient of the 2022 Katharine Wright Trophy. The trophy was established in 1981 and is awarded annually in partnership with the Ninety-Nines, International Organization of Women Pilots to an individual 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.”

Meyers is being recognized for “... her 40 years of dedication to the aerospace industry and her tireless commitment as a volunteer and role model, working to educate and inspire young girls around the globe.”

Meyers’ passion for aviation began when she was 12 years old, when she was given a ride in a family friend’s Cessna 140 airplane. That short flight over the coast of Massachusetts sparked her lifelong interest in things that fly. She earned her private pilot rating during her senior year of high school and went on to join the United States Air Force as an operational computer systems analyst.

While stationed in Germany supporting NATO missions, Meyers was responsible for successful operations of ground radar sites that spanned the entire country. During a deployment in Italy, supporting a month-long international military exercise with 12 NATO countries participating, Meyers single-handedly identified and resolved a major computer problem, resulting in success of the operation. She received an award in recognition of her efforts in saving the mission.

After the launch of the first space shuttle in 1981, Meyers had her mind set on becoming an Aerospace Engineer. An Air Force education officer recommended that she apply to the Airmen Education and Commissioning Program, a special program that sent top candidates to college full time while on paid active duty. Meyers became one of only five people in the Air Force selected for the Astronautical Engineering degree program that year and went on to attend the University of Texas at Austin, where she graduated in 1987.

After eight years serving her country, Meyers spent the next 30 years working in industry, providing support to many key platforms, both military and civilian, and cultivating various mentorship

programs to offer a role model to those interested in taking a similar path. She supported many military airborne platforms in her impressive career, making major contributions to enhance our warfighting capabilities. Meyers worked as a lead Systems Engineer at Boeing on the NATO, U.S., and U.K Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) reconnaissance aircraft program, for which she was presented a prestigious Vice-Presidential award for her efforts; she served as Senior Program Manager for *Connexion by Boeing's* government and executive customers, managing mission-critical airborne communications systems for aircraft including Air Force One; and working for Northrop Grumman on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter "Lightning II" program, Meyers was one of two senior managers overseeing production and delivery of the F-35's communications, navigation, and identification systems.

While leading the Women in Aviation International San Diego Chapter from 2015-2017 and again in 2019, Meyers managed the planning and execution of annual Girls in Aviation Day (GIAD) events, educating hundreds of young girls about aviation careers. In 2016, Meyers planned a special event with the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, including a private meet-and-greet with USMC Capt Katie Higgins, who at the time was piloting their C-130 aircraft, "Fat Albert". In 2019, the annual event Meyers planned for GIAD hosted 200 girls, mostly from underprivileged communities, on a custom overnight aviation education program on the USS Midway aircraft carrier.

Meyers' passion for inspiring young girls to "be all they can be" led her to leave the F-35 program in early 2017 to become a full-time volunteer for the non-profit organization Dreams Soar, Inc. (DSI), offering her assistance after learning about founder Shaesta Waiz's plans to fly solo around the world to inspire young girls and boys. Soon after, Waiz asked Meyers to lead DSI's Outreach Program in addition to managing the logistics for DSI's Global Flight for STEM. Meyers not only collaborated with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and their Civil Aviation Authority representatives around the globe during the successful 145-day mission, but also led the planning of 32 DSI Outreach Events, which inspired more than 3,000 youth in 14 countries.

Presently, Meyers spends a portion of her time as a sought-after industry advisor and professional mentor and speaker. For nearly 20 years, Meyers has inspired thousands of people through her STEM-focused speaking engagements, panel discussions, and outreach events. Her current and regular speaking roster includes public schools, universities, museums, and conferences.

"I always say the Katharine Wright Trophy goes to someone who has not only accomplished awesome things but also makes those around them better," said NAA President, Greg Principato. "In her career and in her broader aviation activities, Jill has personified those characteristics. It will be our honor to present Jill with this wonderful award and to recognize her consequential career."

"This award means a great deal to me as it represents my goal of being a driver of good things," said Meyers. "Having an impact on young people's lives makes all of my hard work worth it. The most important thing to me is to inspire others to know that the sky is not the limit!"

Members of the 2022 Katharine Wright Trophy Selection Committee included: Darby Becker, GE Aviation; Dorothy Cochrane, 2020 Katharine Wright Trophy Recipient; Major Eleanor Morgan, 2021 Katharine Wright Trophy Recipient; Pat Prentiss, Past-President, The Ninety-Nines; Barbara Walters-Phillips, 2019 Katharine Wright Trophy Recipient; and Brian Wynne, Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI).

The Katharine Wright Trophy will be presented on a date and location to be determined. For more information or to view a complete list of previous recipients, 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.

#####