



Women in Aviation International Cheers for 30 Years

March 16, 2019 – The 30th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference accomplished its goal to Connect. Engage. Inspire at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California, on March 14-16, 2019.

This conference marked 30 years since WAI President Dr. Peggy Chabrian hosted 150 people for the first conference in Prescott, Arizona, hosted by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University at the nearby Sheraton Hotel.

“No one knew what to expect at that first conference, but after a weekend of networking, it was clear there was a need for an event where women in the aviation industry could interact,” says Dr. Chabrian. “Soon, the conference became an annual event, and in December 1994, Women in Aviation International was established as a professional, non-profit organization.”

A highlight of every conference is the induction of women into WAI’s International Pioneer Hall of Fame. This year’s inductees include: **Leanne Caret**, executive vice president of The Boeing Company who serves as president and CEO of Boeing Defense, Space and Security unit; **Mary Golda Ross**, the first known Native American female engineer and the first female engineer in the history of Lockheed and one of the 40 founding engineers of the renowned and highly secretive Skunk Works; and **The U.S. Coast Guard’s First Women Aviators and Aviation-Related Enlisted Women**, a group of three officers and six enlisted women who proved women had a place in Coast Guard aviation and who opened the door for future generations of women to pursue their military aviation dreams.

Visits to the active exhibit hall were interspersed with general sessions on Friday and Saturday mornings, with dozens of educational sessions held both afternoons where attendees could choose which session was best for their career goals and interests.

Girls in Aviation Day Long Beach

With the enthusiastic participation of the Long Beach Unified School District, Girls in Aviation Day Long Beach was the biggest conference Girls in Aviation Day to date. More than 250 girls, along with their chaperones, were hosted by more than 100 WAI volunteers. The girls visited 20 activity stations, heard about 10 different aviation careers from a career panel, met role models, and simply had fun while they learned about aviation. The older girls had the opportunity to meet with college representatives, including those from U.S. Air Force Academy, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Kent State University, Ohio University, Western Michigan University, St. Louis University, Delta State University, and more. Each participant earned a WAI Aviation Girl Fun Patch.

Other conference highlights include:

- A total attendance of 4,500 includes 136 international representatives from 33 countries. Most international attendees are from Nigeria, followed by Canada, Ghana, and Australia.

- The attendees are 76% women and 24% men.
- The exhibit hall hosted 170 separate companies and organizations, representing all aspects of the aviation community, including drones.
- 156 scholarships were distributed to WAI members at every stage of life from for both academic use, lifestyle enhancement, and flight training, including type ratings. A total \$875,065 in scholarships was awarded, which put the total scholarships awarded since 1995 to more than \$12 million.

The 31st Annual International Women in Aviation Conference will be held March 5-7, 2020, at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. For more information, visit www.wai.org.

Note to Editors: High-resolution photographs of all aspects of the conference are available at photo.wai.org.

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Women in Aviation International is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing networking, mentoring and scholarship opportunities for women and men who are striving for challenging and fulfilling careers in the aviation and aerospace industries. For more information, contact WAI at 3647 State Route 503 South, West Alexandria, OH 45381, Phone (937) 839-4647; Fax (937) 839-4645 or through www.wai.org.

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