



## WAI 2022 – WE’RE BACK!

### *Three-day annual conference bests all expectations for attendees and exhibitors*

**March 20, 2022**– Women in Aviation International held one of its largest and most successful annual gatherings during the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Women in Aviation Conference at Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee, March 17-19, 2022. With its unique blend of world-class speakers, busy exhibit hall, an array of education sessions, and 103 scholarship awards, the WAI 2022 conference delivered numerous opportunities to connect and network with female peers in the aviation and aerospace industry.

“The strength of WAI lies in the celebration of so many like-minded women who come together to share their passion for aviation and aerospace, support each other, learn from each other, and foster the next generation in aviation.” said WAI CEO Allison McKay. “We hosted dozens of networking and education sessions, assembled another extraordinary group of keynote speakers, honored three trailblazing pioneers during our annual Pioneer Hall of Fame induction, and presented more than \$473,000 in scholarships to deserving WAI members. Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, our passionate members, and impressive collection of exhibitors, WAI 2022 was an amazing venue to commemorate Women’s History month and advance our mission to connect, engage, and inspire our current and future workforce of diverse and accomplished members,” she added.

A highlight of every conference is the induction of women into WAI’s International Pioneer Hall of Fame. This year’s inductees include: **Cornelia Clark Fort**, the first female pilot in American history to die on active duty in 1943; **Capt. Rosemary Bryant Mariner**, U.S. Navy (ret.), a member of the first group of eight women to train as naval aviators in 1973; **Col. Peggy A. Phillips**, U.S. Air Force (ret.), the first woman selected by the 702<sup>nd</sup> Military Airlift Squadron to attend undergraduate pilot training.

Visits to the sold-out exhibit hall were interspersed with general sessions on Friday and Saturday mornings. Dozens of education sessions and professional development seminars and workshops were held Thursday through Saturday where attendees could chose which sessions were best for their career goals and personal interests.

During the WAI membership meeting, Kathy Yodice was approved as a new board member, and Linda Markham, Rhonda Larance, and Shannon Weidenkamp were re-elected. At the conclusion of the show, Linda Markham’s term as board chair ended and Capt. Deborah Hecker, American Airlines senior manager flight operations-policy & procedures, became the new WAI Board chair.

New this year, WAI unveiled *Conference Replay* a virtual opportunity to view some favorite sessions from this year's event. Details will follow in the April 2022 *WAI Connect eNewsletter*.

### Girls in Aviation Day Nashville

On Saturday, March 19, over 200 girls, along with their chaperones, were hosted by more than 100 WAI volunteers, at Girls in Aviation Day Nashville at Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center. The girls, ages 8-17, visited 21 activity stations, heard about 7 different aviation careers at a career panel, had lunch with Sara Langberg, an aeromechanical engineer and one of the designers of the Ingenuity Mars Helicopter, met role models, and 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, Liberty University, Ohio University, St. Louis University, University of North Dakota, and more. Each participant earned a WAI Aviation Girl Fun Patch.

Other conference highlights include:

- A total attendance of over 4,500 includes 65 international representatives from 16 countries including Canada, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ireland, Brazil, Germany, Singapore, Belize, the United Kingdom and others.
- The attendees were 68% women and 32% men.
- The exhibit hall hosted 176 separate companies and organizations, representing all aspects of the aviation community, including drones.
- 103 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 \$473,000 in scholarships was awarded, which put the total scholarships awarded since 1995 to more than \$14.5 million.
- A special tribute to Wally Funk, WAI Lifetime Member 26, for her trailblazing trip to space aboard Blue Origin's New Shepard, and for receiving NAA's 2021 Katherine and Marjorie Stinson Trophy.
- WAI and the Civil Air Patrol signed a new partnership agreement for joint efforts to foster interest in aviation, share aerospace education resources, and provide opportunities for youth to experience flight.
- The WAI chapter network reached 153 global chapters in 22 countries worldwide.

The 34th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference will be held February 23-25, 2023, at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California. For more information, visit [www.wai.org/23conference](http://www.wai.org/23conference).

View all the videos from the WAI Annual Conference in Nashville, including the opening Conference video, 2022 Scholarship Winners, Pioneer Hall of Fame inductees, Girls in

Aviation Day 2021 wrap-up, the opening Conference video, on the WAI YouTube Channel, [WomeninAviationIntl](#).

Note to Editors: High-resolution photographs of all aspects of the conference are available at <https://bit.ly/WAI22-MediaPhotos>.

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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 via email [waihq@wai.org](mailto:waihq@wai.org); phone (937) 839-4647 or through [www.WAI.org](http://www.WAI.org).

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