



WAI 2020 Conference Hosts Record Number of Attendees & Exhibitors

Three days focused on workforce issues, professional development & education seminars, and Girls in Aviation Day Orlando, Florida

March 8, 2020 – Women in Aviation International held another successful annual gathering during the 31st Annual International Women in Aviation Conference at Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, March 5-7, 2020. With its unique blend of top-notch speakers, busy exhibit hall, an array of education sessions, and more than 100 scholarship awards, the WAI 2020 conference delivered numerous opportunities to connect and network with female peers in the aviation and aerospace industry.

“I was inspired to meet so many engaging members and corporations that believe in our WAI mission to continue creating and growing programs to assist with our members’ personal and professional development,” says newly appointed CEO Allison McKay. “Together we can ensure that the aviation industry has the talent needed for a vibrant and sustainable future. I’m excited to work with the WAI Board of Directors to advance our mission through initiatives designed to engage, inspire, and educate our current and future workforce,” adds Allison.

A highlight of every conference is the induction of women into WAI’s International Pioneer Hall of Fame. This year’s inductees include: **Maj. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt**, commander, U.S. Air Force Recruiting Service, and the first U.S. Air Force female fighter pilot; **Patty Wagner**, an airshow legend, multi-rated pilot, and a devoted WAI volunteer; and **The U.S. Army’s First Women Rotary Wing Aviators**, a group of nine female helicopter pilots who represent the first women in rotary wing aviation to serve in the U.S. Army. These four lieutenants and five warrant officers proved women had a place in military aviation and blazed the trail forward for future generations of Army women.

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

During the WAI membership meeting, Andrea Berry was approved as a new board member, Deborah Baugh and Brittney Tough were re-elected. Marci Veronie’s term as board chair ended and Linda Markham, Cape Air president, became the new WAI Board chair.

Girls in Aviation Day Orlando

On Saturday, March 7, 250 girls, along with their chaperones, were hosted by more than 100 WAI volunteers, at Girls in Aviation Day Orlando at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort. The girls, ages 8-17, 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, California Aeronautical University, Cochise Community College, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Jacksonville University, Kent State University, Liberty University, Ohio University, St. Louis University, University of Dubuque, University of North Dakota, and more. Each participant earned a WAI Aviation Girl Fun Patch.

Other conference highlights include:

- A total attendance of nearly 4,500 includes 142 international representatives from 31 countries including Nigeria, Canada, Ghana, Australia, Iceland, and others.
- The attendees are 70% women and 30% men.
- The exhibit hall hosted 180 separate companies and organizations, representing all aspects of the aviation community, including drones.
- 151 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 \$831,365 in scholarships was awarded, which put the total scholarships awarded since 1995 to more than \$13 million.
-

The 32nd Annual International Women in Aviation Conference will be held March 11-13, 2021, at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center in Reno, Nevada. For more information, visit www.wai.org.

View all the video from the WAI Annual Conference in Orlando, including Girls in Aviation Day 2020, the opening Conference video, on the WAI YouTube Channel, [WomeninAviationIntl](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWomInAviationIntl).

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

###

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, Tel: (937) 839-4647; or through www.wai.org.

Media Contact: Molly Martin, Outreach Director
850-508-8769, mmartin@wai.org