



International Women in Aviation Conference Unique Among Aviation Gatherings

The 28th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference accomplished its goal to Connect. Engage. Inspire. at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort In Lake Buena Vista, Florida, March 2-4, 2017.

"The accomplishments and the sophistication of our speakers this year was impressive. This year's conference reflected the cutting edge of innovation and a passion for aviation," said Women in Aviation International (WAI) President Dr. Peggy Chabrian. "Combining technology with the traditional enthusiasm and diversity of our attendees is an ideal formula for a successful conference."

A highlight of Saturday night's closing banquet was the awarding of scholarships, including type ratings and other flight training scholarships as well academic scholarships. The first class of Women Naval Aviators; Elizabeth "Betty" Everts Green, founder of Missionary Aviation Fellowship; and Lt. General Stayce Harris, the highest ranking African-American woman military pilot in all the United States armed forces were inducted into WAI's International Pioneer Hall of Fame.

In the exhibit hall, companies and organizations were busy fielding questions, displaying their products, signing up new clients, and renewing relationships with existing clients while making connections with conference-goers. General sessions were held on Friday and Saturday with both afternoons reserved for a selection of education sessions.

WAI's successful youth outreach, Girls in Aviation Day, continued in Orlando. Since many of the girls taking part in Girls in Aviation Day are local Girl Scouts, WAI awarded an "Aviation Girl" fun patch for Aviation. More than 200 young people met with role models from all aspects of aviation, and luncheon speaker Patty Wagstaff, aerobatic champion, was the luncheon speaker. The girls took part in a variety of hands-on activities including some hosted by the Association of Women in Aviation Maintenance (AWAM), which celebrated its 20th anniversary during the conference. In the afternoon, the girls went on a scavenger hunt in the exhibit hall to engage with exhibitors and attendees.

This important outreach will continue with WAI's international Girls in Aviation Day on September 23, 2017, where WAI's network of local chapters will plan and execute their own unique events for girls 8 to 17 years old.

"Our members love seeing the girls at the conference, recognizing that we are sowing seed for future pilots and technicians," says Dr. Chabrian. "For many of the girls, Girls in Aviation Day is their first exposure to the possibility of aviation as a career. We have thousands of role models for them who are glad to spend time and answer questions."

Other conference highlights include:

- Attendance of 4,500 including representatives from 19 countries.
- The exhibit hall hosted 165 separate companies and organizations, representing all aspects of the aviation community.
- 120 scholarships were distributed to WAI members at every stage of life from university students to more accomplished members seeking mid-life challenges, advancements or career changes to aviation. A total of \$643,274 in scholarships were awarded, which put the total scholarships awarded nearly \$11,000,000 since the inception of the scholarship program.
- The WAI chapter network reached 110 global chapters as groups from as far away as Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana participated.

The 29th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference will be held March 22-24, 2018, at Reno-Sparks Convention Center. 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.

###

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.

Contact:

Molly Martin, Women in Aviation International Outreach Director
850-508-8769 | mmartin@wai.org