National Aeronautic Association
Founded in 1905

National Aeronautic Association
Hangar 7, General Aviation Terminal
Reagan National Airport
Washington, D.C., 20001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Aeronautic Association Announces 2023 Recipients of the McDonald Award

Aviation Leader, Journalist, Safety Expert, and Champion Aeromodeller Recognized as the 2023 Distinguished Statesmen of Aviation.

Washington, DC, November 7, 2023 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that Gregory Feith, Wilson Leach, Jim Richmond, and Robert Stangarone are the 2023 Distinguished Statesmen of Aviation.

The NAA's Board of Directors established the Wesley L. McDonald Distinguished Statesman and Stateswoman of Aviation Award on October 16, 1954. The award honors outstanding living Americans who, through their efforts over an extended period of years, have made significant contributions to aeronautics and reflected credit upon America and themselves.

Previous recipients of this award include Chuck Yeager, Olive Ann Beech, Clay Lacy, and Majorie and Katherine Sinson.

“The history of aviation is marked by great people who have impacted the industry in extraordinary ways with their life’s work,” said Amy Spowart, President and CEO of the NAA. “This award serves to recognize these remarkable people. This year's awardees represent excellence in vital industry sectors. From safety to leadership and beyond, this distinguished group is excellence personified, and we are honored to recognize them and their contributions to aviation.”

The 2023 honorees are:

Gregory A. Feith for “his lifetime achievements as an aviation safety expert, champion of best practices, and advocacy elevating aviation safety awareness and training for the next generation.”

Wilson Leach for “his extraordinary dedication to serving the aviation field over more than half a century and perseverance in nurturing AIN from a small publishing company into an industry leader.”

Jim Richmond for “significant advancements in aviation, earning hundreds of aero sports awards, inspiring youth into aviation-related careers, and serving the US as an aero sports competitor and in the military.”

Robert Stangarone for “his nearly five decades of skilled leadership as a communicator, strategic thinker, journalist, and chronicler of aviation history.

The selection committee for the 2023 Distinguished Statesman & Stateswoman of Aviation Award includes:

Jim Albaugh, NAA Board Chair
J. Randolph Babbitt, former FAA Administrator
Cassandra Bosco, Stateswoman of Aviation (2021)
Peggy Chabrian, Stateswoman of Aviation (2016)
Julie Clark, Stateswoman of Aviation (2020)
David Franson, Statesman of Aviation (2020)
Jonathan Gaffney, Statesman of Aviation (2019)
William Garvey, Statesman of Aviation (2018)
Angela Gittens, Stateswoman of Aviation (2021)
Michael Huerta, former FAA Administrator
John King, Statesman of Aviation (2018)
Martha King, Stateswoman of Aviation (2018)
Richard Koenig, Statesman of Aviation (2012)
Jean Lydon-Rodgers, Stateswoman of Aviation (2021)
William Shea, Statesman of Aviation (2022)

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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.

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