

## WAI Concludes Successful Reno Conference



**March 25, 2018** – The 29th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference accomplished its goal to Connect. Engage. Inspire. at Reno-Sparks Convention Center in Reno, Nevada, March 22-24, 2018.

"Our annual conference covers serious topics and provides crucial career guidance, but its strength is in the celebration of so many like-minded women who come together to share their passion for aviation and aerospace," said Women in Aviation International (WAI) President Dr. Peggy Chabrian. "From a NASA astronaut, top-level women executives, engineers, pilots of all levels right through young students, and all aerospace professions, we are united in a desire to help one another and further our careers and personal lives."

A highlight of every conference is the induction of women into WAI's International Pioneer Hall of Fame. This year's inductees include: **Bonnie Tiburzi Caputo**, the first woman hired by a major airline as a member of the cockpit crew whose American Airlines uniform is on display at the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum; **Kathleen Fox** whose career in air traffic control in Canada led to senior positions with Nav Canada and today she serves as chair of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada; and **Brigadier General Linda K. McTague** whose 28-year career with the United States Air Force culminated in an assignment as the commander of the District of Columbia Air National Guard.

At the membership meeting, Marcie Veronie of Avemco was named as the new chair of WAI's board of directors and three board members (Abingdon Mullins, Deborah Hecker, and Brian Bolt) were re-elected and Michaela Lucas was elected as a new board member.

Visits to the active exhibit hall were interspersed with general sessions on Friday and Saturday mornings, with dozens of educational sessions held both afternoons.

WAI continued its successful youth outreach with Girls in Aviation Day Reno, where over 200 local girls, including Girl Scouts, were introduced to the possibilities of an aviation career through fun activities, meeting role models, and touring the exhibit hall. The girls were inspired by a diverse career panel and the luncheon speaker, Shaesta Waiz, the first civilian female pilot from Afghanistan who in 2017 completed a solo flight around the world. Older girls met with representatives from aviation colleges and universities.

This important youth outreach will continue with WAI's international Girls in Aviation Day on October 13, 2018, where WAI's network of local chapters will plan and execute their own unique events for girls 8 to 17 years old.

"These girls represent the next generation of women who will work in the aviation and aerospace industry. The extraordinarily smart, thoughtful and insightful questions asked by the girls from Reno during the Career Panel and of Shaesta Waiz are an excellent illustration of the passion and seriousness of our upcoming generations of girls. WAI members truly enjoy greeting the girls and answering their articulate and challenging questions," said Dr. Chabrian. "For some girls, Girls in Aviation Day is their first exposure to aviation and airplanes."

Other conference highlights include:

- A total attendance of 3,200 included 114 international representatives from 21 countries.
- The exhibit hall hosted 162 separate companies and organizations, representing all aspects of the aviation community, including drones.
- 142 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 of \$695,500 in scholarships was awarded, which put the total scholarships awarded since 1995 to \$11,495,581.
- The WAI chapter network reached 117 global chapters in 17 countries worldwide.

The 30th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference will be held March 14-16, 2019, at Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California. For more information, visit [www.wai.org](http://www.wai.org).

Note to Editors: High-resolution photographs of all aspects of the conference are available at [photo.wai.org](http://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](http://www.wai.org).

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