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A membership organization dedicated to preserving the past and fostering the future of flight.

Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame Names 2017 Inductees

MADISON, WI. August 29, 2017 – Four aviators will be inducted into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame at a ceremony on October 21, 2017. William Amorde, Don Cacic, Gene Chase, and Charles Swain will be honored at the ceremony for their significant contributions to aviation in Wisconsin.

William Amorde is president/owner of Twin Ports Flying Service and airport manager at the Richard I. Bong Airport (KSUW) in Superior, Wisconsin. His first flight lesson was on August 5, 1962; he soloed a little over a month later and earned his private pilot certificate in September 1963. He quickly began adding ratings and certificates, advancing to Airline Transport Pilot. He's also an Airframe and Powerplant (A & P) mechanic with Inspection Authorization, and an FAA Designated Pilot Examiner.

Amorde has been airport manager since 1969, and has been instrumental in the airport's many improvements. Twin Ports has trained more than 3,000 pilots and Amorde has given more than 3,800 flight tests.

Don Cacic contributed to both military and civilian aviation, and was a pilot and an A & P mechanic. He was the airport manager at Alexander Field - South Wood County Airport (KISW) in Wisconsin Rapids from 1989-1999. Born in 1931 in Cook County, Illinois, he moved to Montello, Wisconsin, with his family at age of 15. He earned his private pilot certificate at 17. Don enlisted in the USAF in 1950 starting as a gunner and became a pilot flying B-26s and B-29s. He flew two tours in Korea flying P-51s and B-26s. His service also included flying with the Pennsylvania National Guard following his time in Korea. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart, and more. He was released from active duty in 1952 and served with the Wisconsin Air National Guard in 1954 - 1955.

Don attained the rank of Lt. Colonel in the Civil Air Patrol, and restored many aircraft. He died on October 15, 2004.

Gene Chase served as a military aviator, corporate pilot, flight instructor, aviation museum director, author, restorer of vintage aircraft, and editor of aviation publications. He played a major role in the development of Wisconsin's Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture Museum.

Born September 6, 1924 in Casper, Wyoming, Gene was an active builder of model airplanes and took his first airplane ride at age 12. With the onset of World War II, he set a goal of becoming a Navy carrier pilot. He won his wings as a Navy Ensign on July 1, 1945, and became carrier qualified in October 1945. By the end of 1945, Gene had logged almost 500 military flying hours.

Gene went back to college in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, and used the GI Bill for his flight instructor certification. He continued to fly as a CFI and in the Naval Reserve. Career moves took Gene to Salt Lake City and later to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he retired from the Naval Reserve with the rank of Lt. Commander. His aviation career continued in Tulsa where he flew as a corporate pilot for Amoco.

For more information or to schedule an interview, contact:

Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame

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Gene and his wife Dorothy moved to Hales Corners, Wisconsin in 1973 where they both joined the Experimental Aircraft Association headquarters staff. Gene had key roles in developing the EAA museum, first in Hales Corners and later in Oshkosh. He helped grow its collection of aircraft by flying many of them to Wisconsin from donor locations across the country. In his 65 years as a pilot, Gene flew more than 340 different aircraft types. He was also involved in the restoration of several vintage aircraft. He served on the EAA board of directors as well as that of the Vintage Aircraft Association.

In 2005 the FAA recognized Gene's long record of safe flying by presenting him with its Wright Brothers Master Pilot award. He died on January 2, 2017.

Charles Swain was born on October 8, 1946 in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. With an interest in aviation as a youth, he became a member of the Dodge County Squadron of the United States Air Force Auxiliary-Civil Air Patrol. He served as a cadet officer and commander.

Charles attended Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida, to pursue a degree as an aircraft maintenance technician. He was hired by Boeing Aircraft and then by Delta Airlines, based out of Chicago O'Hare International Airport (KORD). About the same time, he married Tina Spangler and began to raise a family. They returned to Beaver Dam where Chuck went to work for Paul Baker, the founder and owner of Beaver Aviation at the Dodge County Airport (KUNU) in Juneau, Wisconsin. Mentored by Paul, Chuck worked there for several years before he purchased Beaver Aviation in 1975. Chuck holds the A & P certificate with Inspection Authorization. He continued to own Beaver Aviation for the next 30 years. During this time, Chuck earned his private pilot certificate from WAHF Inductee Roy Reabe, and owned a Piper Tri-Pacer.

While at Beaver Aviation, Chuck entered local politics and worked directly with the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics and the FAA to enhance and foster airport infrastructure. He served on several state aviation safety committees and served on the board of the Wisconsin Aviation Trades Association (WATA).

The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame induction banquet will be held this fall at the EAA Aviation Museum in Oshkosh, on October 21. All WAHF members will receive an invitation. Inductees' family and friends as well as the public are encouraged to attend. Call Tom at 608-221-1994 for more information.

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