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Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame Names 2018 Inductees

MADISON, WI. June 8, 2018 – Four aviators will be inducted into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame on Saturday, October 20, 2018. Jerome LeBarron, Janis Sierra, Joshua Sanford, and Donald Winkler will be honored at the induction ceremony for their significant contributions to aviation in Wisconsin.

Jerome LeBarron was raised in Osseo and started his aviation career in 1969 at age 20. He served in the U.S. Navy as an aircrew member with VW-1 and VQ-1, flying low-level typhoon penetrations and “other” reconnaissance throughout the western Pacific and Vietnam in the Lockheed L-1049 Constellation. Jerry attended UW-Eau Claire and worked for Gibson Aviation. In 1978 he graduated from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and launched a 40-year career in aerospace, holding key leadership positions in Engineering, Program Management and Flight Test for Lockheed, North American Rockwell and Northrop Grumman. Jerry has been an active flight instructor since 1976, founding LeBarron Aviation at Burbank Airport, California, which specialized in advanced flight training. He is an aircraft owner currently living on the Waunakee Airport.

Janis Sierra graduated from Brookfield High School in 1975 and planned to go into nursing. Money was an issue and like so like many before her she turned to the military. Janis was the fifteenth female to graduate from the Army’s helicopter pilot training program. She was the only female in her Fort Rucker, Alabama, flight school class graduating in 1975 as a Warrant Officer. Sierra served four years active duty, leaving the Army to fly helicopter charters in Florida. She returned to the Army as a civilian contractor teaching Army pilots to fly by instruments. She was hired by Flight for Life in 1987. Sierra was named the 2013 National EMS Pilot of the Year by the National EMS Pilots Association.

Joshua Sanford was born near Friendship, Wisconsin, January 19, 1919. He grew up in the Richland Center area and graduated from Viroqua High School in 1936. Sanford later enrolled at the University of Wisconsin – Madison but would drop out and enlist in the Army Air Corps on November 4, 1940. Joshua was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and awarded his wings January 1943. Sanford was assigned to the 75th Fighter Squadron, 23rd Fighter Group, 14th Air Force in China. Between 1943 and 1945, he flew 102 combat missions and was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Air Medals, the Purple Heart, and five campaign ribbons. Following the war, Sanford owned an electronics firm, managed the Reedsburg Airport, and was appointed Civil Defense Director for an 11-county area of Southwestern Wisconsin. He died on October 21, 1962.

Donald Winkler, Madison, worked for Wisconsin Aviation as its Media Public Relations Chair beginning in 1996. Don received the Carl Guell Aviation Education award by the Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Aeronautics in 2005 in recognition of leading more than 1000 children on airport tours at Dane County Regional Airport (KMSN) in Madison. In 2015 he received the WI Airport Management Association (WAMA) lifetime service award for his dedicated service to Aviation in Wisconsin. He also coordinated the television coverage of EAA AirVenture Oshkosh by (KIDTV), a Sun Prairie based cable television program. He served in the USAF in 1951-55 as an Air Traffic Controller, and later with Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) in Madison. Don has flown several light aircraft and has been involved as an active member in CAP since 1971.

The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be held this fall at the EAA Aviation Museum in Oshkosh. Inductees’ family, friends, and the public are invited to attend. Call Tom Thomas at 608-221-1994 or visit the organization’s website for more information.

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