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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...

WAHF Announces 2012 Inductees Five to be inducted at fall ceremony

OSHKOSH, WI. March 12, 2012 – The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame has announced its slate of 2012 inductees who will be honored at a ceremony this fall. Lavern Griffin, Tom Hegy, Mike McArdle, and posthumously, Warren O'Brien and John Salzer, will be inducted for their significant accomplishments and contributions to aviation in Wisconsin.

LAVERN GRIFFIN

Born in Wycocena, Wisconsin, Lavern Griffin volunteered for military service in 1946 and received his Air Force commission in 1948. Assigned to the 12th Reconnaissance Squadron, he became one of the premier aerial reconnaissance operatives in the USAF. Griffin retired in 1974 as Wing Commander of the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing stationed in the United Kingdom.

Along the way, Griffin acquired a degree in aerospace engineering at Penn State, and piloted C-45, C-47, C-54, RF-80, F-84, RF-84F, RF-86, F2H-2P, Banshee, and RF-4C Phantom II aircraft. The highlight of his military career occurred in 1954 when he led the first military reconnaissance over-flights of the Soviet Union. (Strictly speaking, this was an act of war, which added to the imperative that the flights not be detected.) Griffin and his team succeeded, but the flights remained top secret until the end of the Cold War.

After leaving the Air Force, Griffin came home to Wisconsin, where he was instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of Gilbert Field at Rio. He continued to fly and won the 1993 National Stearman Aerobatic championship, as he logged 9,000-plus hours of flight time. In 2010, he became the 27th pilot from Wisconsin to receive the FAA's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award. Griffin makes his home in Portage.

TOM HEGY

Born in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1944, Tom Hegy, "grew up" at the Hartford Airport where he learned to fly. At age 18, still a student pilot, he owned a J-3 Cub and flew it to Arizona, where he acquired his private and commercial licenses.

Back in Wisconsin in 1966, he started his lifelong career as a "aerial applicator" or crop duster. He started flying for Reabe Spraying Service in 1971 and continues there today, having logged more than 30,000 hours. He was and is a working pilot whose job requires skill to apply agricultural chemicals precisely and safely, plus stamina to put in long days.

When not flying for work, Hegy flies for fun. He has been a active participant in the Young Eagles program for many years and began work on his first airplane construction/restoration project in 1978—a 1929



For more information or to schedule an interview, contact:

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Travel Air E-4000 that he flew for 1,100 hours before redesigning and rebuilding it. He has also owned and improved several Piper PA-12s.

MICHAEL MCARDLE

Mike McArdle was born in Denver in 1937, and raised in Michigan, but has spent his professional years in Wisconsin. He is an aviator and educator with a list of accomplishments so long and varied they are best summarized as bullet points:

- Private, commercial, instrument-rated, balloon pilot licenses plus 30 years service, US Army Reserve, specializing in combat intelligence and aviation instruction, as an instructor and supervisor.
- Lt. Col. Civil Air Patrol, National Aerospace Education Advisor, senior aerospace educator.
- Recipient of numerous state and national education awards, including the Crown Circle Award of the National Conference on Aviation and Space Education.
- As a Phd student at UW-Madison, (1960s - '70s) he acquired a Cessna 175 to better perform his job as supervisor of public school interns (practice teachers) throughout the state, flying instead of driving.
- As a teacher in the Madison Schools in 1972, he persuaded the school board to incorporate airplane experience in the curriculum for students of geography and aviation—first of its kind in Wisconsin. He revised the curriculum to allow students to study aviation related subjects for five years, more than any school system in the state.

As a successful, lifelong educator, McArdle has created a legacy of people who have made aviation their life's work because of the education, training, and inspiration they received at his hands. He lives in Madison.

PIONEER CATEGORY

Warren O'Brien and John Salzer will be inducted in WAHF's Pioneer category, for aviators who made significant accomplishments and contributions to aviation before 1927.

JOHN P. SALZER

John Salzer was a prominent La Crosse businessman with an early interest in aviation. In 1911, he led the effort or La Crosse to take part in Hugh Robinson's Mississippi Valley flight and welcomed him when Robinson landed. Property he and his family owned on the edge of La Crosse (now Trane Co.) was used as a landing field by touring aviators as early as 1918.

In 1919, the Salzers leased the property to the city for an airport. It was one of the first municipal airports in Wisconsin. The airport was one of two places in Wisconsin on the "experimental" air mail route of 1919-1921. Salzer was also elected president of the local chapter of the Aero Club, the national aviation booster club. Salzer is worthy of induction as a pioneer, not as an aviator, but as a community leader who supported aviation in its fledgling days.



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WARREN O'BRIEN

Aerial photography was a novel and hazardous undertaking when Waukesha photographer Warren O'Brien began taking pictures from the cockpit of a JN in 1924. He later mastered wing-walking and took photos while perched on the wing. In time he acquired a movie camera and shot motion pictures while aloft. A professional who made his living as a commercial photographer, O'Brien loved flying. He was a pilot and one of the founders of the Waukesha Flying (Aviation) Club, which survives today.

O'Brien was an advocate for construction of an airport at Waukesha. A historian also, O'Brien researched, wrote, supplied the photos for, and published several books on aviation in Waukesha County. He left behind an archive with hundreds of photos depicting the aviation history of Waukesha and Wisconsin. As a photographer who made a commitment to aviation in the mid-1920s, O'Brien is a pioneer of aviation in our state.

2012 INDUCTION CEREMONY

The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place on October 27 in the Founder's Wing at the EAA Aviation Center in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Watch the WAHF website for more information at www.WisconsinAviationHallofFame.org or call Michael Goc at 608-547-2309.

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