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Dedicated to the Advancement of the International Helicopter Community

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Dedicated Trainer Receives HAI's Salute to Excellence W.A. "Dub" Blessing Flight Instructor of the Year Award

Alexandria, Va. (Dec. 14, 2017) – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to announce today that John W. Williams, of Fort Worth, Tex., is the 2018 winner of HAI's Salute to Excellence W.A. "Dub" Blessing Flight Instructor of the Year Award (sponsored by H. Ross Perot, Jr. and the Perot family). The award will be presented at HAI's Salute to Excellence Awards dinner at HAI HELI-EXPO 2018 in Las Vegas.

Williams's career as a certificated flight instructor (CFI) spanned more than 35 years, all with Bell Helicopter. Following military service that ended in the 1970s, Williams first joined Bell as a production test pilot. He also worked in the Experimental Flight Test Department before becoming a CFI at the Bell Flight Academy, where he trained countless pilots in 19 countries. As an instructor, he was known for stressing safety both in the helicopter and on the ground. He later became pilot training safety manager for Bell and was a Part 141 night-vision goggle (NVG) instructor. Of Williams's 12,500 flight hours, more than 4,000 hours were earned during flight training. Williams received multiple nominations and letters of recommendation for this award, including one from the namesake of the award, W.A. "Dub" Blessing.

Williams has also led an extraordinary career away from the training department. He participated as a U.S. Precision Helicopter Team pilot (Bell Crew) in the World Helicopter Championships in the former U.S.S.R. in 1978, and again in 1981 in Poland, where the team won the gold medal for the first time. He currently holds five international helicopter speed records, including the Around the World (westbound) record with Ron Bower. He is a lifetime member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots and was president of the Helicopter Club of America.

The award will be presented at the annual Salute to Excellence Awards dinner during HAI HELI-EXPO 2018. HAI HELI-EXPO®, the world's largest helicopter trade show and exhibition, will be held at the Las Vegas Convention Center, North and Central Halls, in Las Vegas, February 26 – March 1, with the Exhibit Hall open February 27 – March 1. For more information on HAI HELI-EXPO 2018, visit heliexpo.rotor.org.

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HAI is the professional trade association for the civil helicopter industry. HAI's 18,000 members represent 1,800 aviation businesses, and safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.

John Wesley Williams



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