

Grand County's own Penny R. Hamilton, PhD, will be inducted into the Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame at a luncheon banquet at 11 a.m. Oct. 16 inside the Wings over the Rockies Air and Space Museum inside the former Lowry Air Force Base in Denver.

In the Hall of Fame she joins, among others, Colorado aviation figures such as: Harry Combs, Mike Silva, Joe Thibodeau; Grand County's own Emily Howell Warner, Carl Williams, Babette Andre, Elrey Jeppesen, Greg Isbill, Vern Foster, Lew Entz, Lucile Bledsoe, Norm Avery, Gordon Autry, Jack Wilhite, Dody Engel, and Harry Blount.

For longer than 20 years, Dr. Hamilton has been an advocate for more Colorado women to become licensed pilots through her "Teaching Women to Fly Project," as the creator of her "Penny the Pilot Program" to inspire school children to become interested in the mathematics and the science behind aviation, and through her "Colorado Airports History Preservation Project."

The holder of a world aviation speed record, Dr. Hamilton is Colorado's premier female aviation educator and a Colorado pioneer in the preservation of the history of the state's 76 public-use airports.

Dr. Hamilton works to encourage women to see aviation as a rewarding and well-paid career that opens many doors for women to be more upwardly mobile in a society where only one-third of one-percent of our entire population are pilots and, of that fraction, only 6 percent are women.

Her "Teaching Women to Fly Project," which exposed the barriers to women in aviation and offered ways around many of them, met with international acclaim.

By naming an aerial navigation intersection in the skies above Colorado after her, the FAA recognized Dr. Hamilton's contributions to aviation in Colorado. Denver's Channel 7 TV named Dr. Hamilton one of its "Everyday Heroes." Recently, the Greater Granby Area Chamber of Commerce recognized her founding of Pennies for Pets, co-founding the Grand County Aviation Association and co-founding the Friends of the Granby Airport Inc. and the Grand County Business Development Association and for volunteering for innumerable community projects by presenting Dr. Hamilton with the Chamber's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2005, she was named Grand County's Realtor of the Year. In 2009, she received the Colorado Realtor's Association Good Neighbor Award.

Dr. Hamilton has earned academic degrees from Temple University, Columbia College, and the University of Nebraska with post-doctoral work at the Menninger Foundation. She is a 20-year-plus general aviation pilot. Her Piper Turbo Arrow III is based at the Granby-Grand County Airport.

She is an active member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the Colorado Aviation Historical Society, Colorado Pilots Association, Friends of Granby Airport Inc. (founding member and 20-year board member), and the co-founder of the Grand County Aviation Association. Her other memberships include: the National Aeronautic Association, National Association of Flight Instructors, National 99s and Colorado 99s, Spirit of Flight Center & Museum, Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, and Women in Aviation International-WAI.

The luncheon speaker will be Fraser resident, Rear Admiral Dennis Wisely, USN (Ret.), the former leader of the Blue Angels, who flew 350 missions in Vietnam and later commanded the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy. Admiral Wisely holds the Silver Star, two DFCs, 29 Air Medals, and the Purple Heart.

The luncheon/banquet is open to the public. Pre-register at: www.cahofusa.org. No tickets available at the door. The other awardees will be: Michael W. Bertz, PK. Bonde, Norman F. Meyer, Bill Mitchell, D.O. Neary, and John C. Penney.

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