

Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame



Panthéon de l'Aviation du Canada

Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame to Honor Four Inductees and *Belt of Orion* Recipient

2012 Inductees are Nils Christensen; Harold "Gus" Edwards; Pierre Jeannot; Dr. Daffyd Williams; and *Belt of Orion* recipient, Leaven's Aviation Inc.

Montreal, Quebec – December 5, 2011. Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame (CAHF) will induct four Canadians, and recognize a *Belt of Orion* recipient, at its 2012 annual gala dinner and ceremony on Thursday, June 14, 2012.

The Hall's inductees are: **Nils Christensen**, founder of Viking Air and Second World War pilot; Air Marshal **Harold "Gus" Edwards**, a First World War pilot with the Royal Naval Air Service, he was also involved in the founding of the RCAF; **Pierre Jeannot, O.C. C.Q.**, former president and CEO of Air Canada and was also a former Director General of the International Air Transport Association; **Dr. Daffyd "Dave" Williams**, a pilot, medical doctor and a retired Canadian astronaut. **Leavens Aviation Inc.** will receive the *Belt of Orion* award.

This year's inductees' achievements span the spectrum of Canada's rich aviation history; their accomplishments range from the First World War to the space age. They are recognized for playing integral roles in the development of their respective aviation fields, contributing to Canada's development through these roles. The new members will join a roster of 204 men and women aviation pioneers who have been previously honored since the formation of CAHF in 1973.

Mr. Nils Christensen of Salt Spring Island, BC, made his contribution to Canadian aviation with the founding of Viking Air and the acquisition of the rights from de Havilland Canada to manufacture spares for some of its post-war products. The venture has given rise to an internationally reputed aircraft and parts manufacturing concern. Born in Norway in 1921, Nils served in the Merchant Navy and the Royal Norwegian Air Force during the Second World War and, emigrated to Canada in 1951.

Air Marshal Harold "Gus" Edwards (1892-1952) was born in England and raised in Nova Scotia. He served as a pilot with the Royal Naval Air Service in the First World War and was later intimately involved with the founding of the RCAF. Gus was in charge of the monumental personnel management aspects of the BCATP when it began and then fought successfully for the "Canadianization" of the RCAF's contributions to Allied efforts in the RAF as Air Office Commanding-in-Chief of RCAF Overseas.

Mr. Pierre Jeannot, O.C. C.Q., who was born in France in 1933 and emigrated to Canada in 1947, is a former president and CEO of Air Canada, known as an innovator in the field of airline operations and management. An internationally recognized leader in the airline industry, he contributed to the development of civil aviation in Canada and around the world. His work in Air Canada and with the International Air Transport Association as Director General and CEO has been recognized with honours from Canada, France and international organizations.

Dr. Daffyd (Dave) Williams, born in Saskatoon in 1954, is a pilot, medical doctor and a retired Canadian astronaut of outstanding skill, management ability and accomplishment in his work with the Canadian Space Agency. He was appointed Director of NASA's Space and Life Sciences Directorate, a rare accomplishment for a non-American astronaut. Dave made two flights on the Space Shuttle, 1998 and 2007, and in the second was involved in three spacewalks for installations at the International Space Station.

The Belt of Orion Award for Excellence was founded by Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame in 1988 to honour organizations, groups, societies or associations who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of aviation in Canada.

The winner of this year's award is **Leavens Aviation Inc.**, the company began as Leavens Brothers Air Services in 1927, and is one of Canada's great aviation success stories. Its life encompassed several aspects of aviation in Canada and operated until 2011, starting with barnstorming a single aircraft, then flight training, running a major training facility under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), spraying operations, commercial airline operations, light aircraft manufacturing and the sale, distribution and overhaul of aircraft parts.

The 2012 annual dinner and ceremony will be held at Le Windsor, 1170 Peel St, Montreal. Tickets are available through the CAHF website (www.cahf.ca), and also include a one-year *Friend of the Hall* membership. A tax receipt will be supplied for each ticket sold.

Brief History of The Hall:

Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame is located in the hangar at the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, south of Edmonton. Founded in 1973, Members have come from all across Canada and have led extraordinary lives as military and civilian pilots, doctors, scientists, inventors, engineers, astronauts and administrators.

The Hall strives to increase the public's understanding and interest in aviation history by making its displays, archives, records and artefacts accessible to current and future generations. The heroism and courage embodied in the Members of the Hall serves to kindle the spirit of adventure in Canada's youth.

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Related Media: High-resolution photo available online



High-res photo: http://romeooscar.com/CAHF/2012_NilsChristensen.jpg

Caption: Nils Christensen obtained his AME license after coming to Canada, earned a high reputation as an aircraft engineer and established Viking Air in 1970, now employing 500 people at operations in Sidney BC and Calgary AB.

(Photo courtesy Nils Christensen)



High-res photo: http://romeooscar.com/CAHF/2012_GusEdwards.jpg

Caption: Air Marshall Harold "Gus" Edwards is the subject of two biographies written by his daughter, Suzanne K. Edwards, *GUS: From Trapper Boy to Air Marshal*, published in 2007, and a biography for young readers published in 2011, *The Adventures of a Trapper Boy*.

(Photo courtesy Suzanne Edwards)



High-res photo: http://romeooscar.com/CAHF/2012_PierreJeannot.jpg

Caption: Pierre Jeannot of Montreal is a former president and CEO of Air Canada and was recognized as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1988 and inducted to the National Order of Quebec in 2002.

(Photo by Alain Morvan, courtesy of Pierre Jeannot)



High-res photo: http://romeoscar.com/CAHF/2012_DaveWilliams.jpg

Caption: Dave Williams holds three degrees from McGill University: B.Sc., M.Sc. and M.D. He practiced medicine prior to becoming an astronaut and retired from that work on March 1, 2008. (NASA photo via the Internet)



High-res photo: http://romeoscar.com/CAHF/2012_Leavens1.jpg

Caption: An early logo for Leavens Aviation, when it was still called Leavens Brothers Air Services



High-res photo: http://romeoscar.com/CAHF/2012_Leavens2.jpg

Caption: The most recent logo of Leavens Aviation, which ceased operating on August 31, 2011, more than 80 years after its formation as Leavens Brothers Air Services, established by brothers Clare, Art and Walt Leavens



High-res photo: http://romeoscar.com/CAHF/2012_Leavensbiplane.jpg

Caption: Left to right in 1927 are Walt Leavens (born 1903) and brother Art Leavens (1902), two of the founders of Leavens Brothers Aviation, with their first aircraft, a two-seater Swallow biplane. (Photo courtesy Jeff Leavens)