



H. Matthew Simpson  
M. Richard Mellon

### **FAA honors M. Richard Mellon with Master Pilot Award**

NAPLES, Fla. (July 17, 2017) – The Federal Aviation Administration honored M. Richard Mellon with its Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, the most prestigious award the FAA issues to certified pilots.

Mellon's name has been added to the online Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award - Roll of Honor, which recognizes pilots for their dedicated service, technical expertise, professionalism and outstanding contributions to further the cause of aviation safety.

To be eligible for the award named after the Wright Brothers – the first U.S. pilots – a nominee must hold a U.S. Civil Aviation Authority or Federal Aviation Administration pilot certificate, document 50 or more years of civil or military flying experience, be a U.S. citizen, and have three letters of recommendation from other pilots licensed by the FAA.

The award was presented at a Naples Airport Authority board meeting by H. Matthew Simpson, lead representative of the FAA Safety Team, who applauded Mellon's commitment to the aviation industry. "The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award is given to pilots who exhibit professionalism, integrity, leadership and mentorship," said Simpson. "Rick Mellon is the epitome of all of these attributes."

Mellon was inspired by his father who was a flight instructor in World War II. He learned to fly at 14 years old and was commissioned in the U.S. Air Force during college, serving until he graduated from Auburn University. A Naples resident for more than 20 years, he served terms as chair and vice chair during his time on the NAA's Noise Compatibility Committee. During Mellon's tenure in the Civil Air Patrol, he held the positions of inspector general and legal officer for Florida, and also instructed at the national level for both positions.

Mellon is CEO and board chair of Mellon Philanthropic, as well as president and board chair of Mellon Heritage Foundation. He practiced law in Pittsburgh for 25 years and served as an arbitrator and judge in Pennsylvania. Locally, he is a board member of Quest for Success and a volunteer member of Angel Flight, Friends of Naples Airport, Friends of Rookery Bay, Humane Society of Collier County Advisory Board and Rotary Club Naples-Pelican Bay. Mellon is also involved with the American Arbitration Association, Arc Allegheny, Civic Light Opera and Easter Seals.

Naples Municipal Airport began operation in 1943 as a military airfield. In 1969, the Florida State Legislature created the City of Naples Airport Authority as an independent government agency charged with the operation, development and improvement of the airport.

The airport is home to flight schools, air charter operators, car rental agencies, and corporate aviation and nonaviation businesses, as well as fire/rescue services, mosquito control, the Collier County Sheriff's Aviation Unit and other community services. During the 2015-16 fiscal year, the airport accommodated 95,050 takeoffs and landings.

All funds used for the airport's operation, maintenance and improvements are generated from activities at the airport or federal and state grants from aviation-related user fees; the airport receives no property tax dollars. The Florida Department of Transportation values the airport's annual economic impact to the community at \$283.5 million.

For more information or to subscribe to email updates about the airport, visit [www.FlyNaples.com](http://www.FlyNaples.com).

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