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Dedicated to the Advancement of the International Helicopter Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 26, 2019

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Helicopter Foundation International Awards 20 Scholarships to Next Generation of Helicopter Industry Professionals

Alexandria, Virginia (February 26, 2019) — Helicopter Foundation International (HFI), the charitable arm of Helicopter Association International, is pleased to announce the 20 recipients of scholarships for 2019. Available to aviation students around the world, these scholarships support HFI's long-standing mission to educate the next generation of helicopter professionals.

This year's awards include six scholarships for students in helicopter maintenance technician programs, four scholarships for pilots working toward earning their commercial helicopter ratings, one for safety professionals, and seven for established maintenance professionals seeking training for specific helicopters or components.

New this year is a pair of scholarships for students at Southern Utah University (SUU) for pilot training in specific flight labs.

"The cost of education in aviation is high, both for pilots and maintenance personnel," says Allison McKay, vice president of HFI. "So often, this requires a student to split their time between academics and working to pay for their education. Through our scholarship program, we help to offset this burden and allow the students to focus on continuing their education. We offer our congratulations to this year's recipients."

HFI funds these scholarships — this year worth approximately \$70,000 — through donations, auctions, other fundraising events, and direct funding by SUU. As a nonprofit foundation, HFI also supports helicopter safety programs and the preservation of the history of the helicopter industry.

Each year, HFI presents four \$5,000 scholarships to pilots working toward earning their commercial helicopter rating so that they may pursue employment as a helicopter pilot. This year's recipients are Sakaya Arai of Beverly Hills, California; Charles Beesley of Cole Camp, Missouri; Melissa Cooper of Kailua, Kona, Hawaii; and Joyce Yu of Portland, Oregon.

Recipients of the new flight training scholarships at Southern Utah University, worth up to \$20,000 each, are Brendon Peterson of Ionia, Michigan; Kaylee Elliot of Cedar City, Utah.

Additionally, HFI awards up to six \$2,500 scholarships for students in maintenance technician programs. This year, HFI awarded the scholarships to Evan Falk of Holt, Michigan; Tracy Geest of Tremonton, Utah; Hamin Kirn of Williamsport, Pennsylvania; Michael Ranker of Laurel, Maryland; Noah White of Cornerbrook, Newfoundland-Labrador, Canada; and Carlos Ybarra of Waco, Texas.

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HFI SCHOLARSHIPS

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HFI proudly offers the Michelle North Scholarship for Safety, awarded this year to Joshua Chason of Braselton, Virginia. North is a past chairman of Helicopter Association International's (HAI) Safety Committee, an educator, and an industry-recognized helicopter safety expert and advocate. This scholarship provides the recipient with full tuition to the HFI Safety Management program at HAI HELI-EXPO.

HFI also oversees the Bill Sanderson Aviation Maintenance Scholarships, administering the program on behalf of HAI's Technical Committee. Offered in conjunction with airframe, engine, and avionics manufacturers, recipients use the scholarships to attend airframe- or equipment-specific training courses with stipends of up to \$1,600.

Manufacturers participating in the program for 2019 include Airbus, Honeywell, Leonardo, MD Helicopters, Pratt and Whitney, Rolls-Royce, Honeywell, and Safran Turbomeca. Recipients of the scholarships and stipends this year include: Paul Pelletier of Columbia, Connecticut (Airbus); Cody Bentzel of Williamsport, Pennsylvania (Leonardo); Ethan Mutschler of Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania (Pratt and Whitney); Klade Kerr of Timmons, Ontario, Canada (MD Helicopters); Daniel Galica of Tinley Park, Illinois (Honeywell); Evan Falk or Holt, Michigan (Rolls-Royce); and Cullen Thompson of Mountain, Ontario, Canada (Safran Turbomeca).

“We encourage students around the world to pursue their dreams of flying and maintaining helicopters,” added McKay. “The application process for the 2020 scholarships begins in August 2019, and interested students can find more information at our website: www.helicopterfoundation.org.”

Helicopter Foundation International is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the history of vertical flight, improving its safety, and educating the next generation of pilots and maintenance technicians. In doing so, the Foundation aims to perpetuate the contributions of vertical flight to the world.