



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NAFI Awards the Greg J. Laslo Excellence in Writing Award during EAA AirVenture

**Portage, MI, August 29, 2023** - The National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI) announces the winners of the Greg J. Laslo Excellence in Writing Award. The awards were presented at the annual member breakfast on July 27 at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh.

This year's Greg J. Laslo Excellence in Writing Award went to Jen Watson, Dana McIlwain, and Josh Watson. Greg Laslo was NAFI's *Mentor* magazine editor from 2000 - 2011. During Laslo's tenure, *Mentor* magazine evolved from a modest newsletter into a magazine filled with articles spanning the spectrum of aviation education — from flying technique to business practices to professional development. Written by NAFI members for NAFI members, *Mentor* provides a unique aviation journalism perspective not found elsewhere.



This award, named in Laslo's honor, was created by the NAFI board after his retirement. It is presented to those individuals who have made exceptional contributions to NAFI publications through content in *Mentor* magazine, *eMentor* digital newsletter, NAFI NOTAMS blog, and other industry outlets.

Jen Watson, Dana McIlwain, and Josh Watson are the creators of The Right Seat advice column that debuted in the January/February 2023 issue of *Mentor*. After writing feature articles for *Mentor*, Jen Watson and McIlwain proposed authoring an advice column reminiscent of a "Dear Abby" for pilots. Jen's husband Josh was recruited to round out the team.

"They saw a need and stepped up to fill it," said Beth Stanton, NAFI's Director of Publication and Editor. "After cringing for years reading really bad answers to questions asked on social media, they had to do something about it," Stanton said. "Between the three of them, they have the bases covered — they are a dream team of instructors, flight school and maintenance shop owners, and a safety inspector."

Jen and Josh Watson are co-owners of AeroDynamic Aviation San Jose, California. Jen Watson holds certificates for ATP AMEL, CPL ASEL and ASES, CFI, CFII, MEI, and AGI. She is an FAA Gold Seal flight instructor and two-time NAFI Master Flight

Instructor. Josh Watson is an A&P mechanic with inspection authorization and runs the operational and maintenance aspects of the school. He is an instrument rated pilot and is pursuing a commercial pilot certificate with the eventual goal of becoming a CFI. McIlwain earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees in flight training and worked as an academic director for a Part 141 school. She has been a flight instructor since 2015 and is a safety inspector for a three-letter agency.

“I am honored to accept this award with these amazing people and great friends,” McIlwain said. “I am so appreciative of NAFI for giving us this platform to share our experience, thoughts, and ideas.” “It is a great honor to be recognized for our work,” Josh Watson said. “There were two things I always wanted to do in life — one was to fly airplanes and the other was to write,” Jen Watson said. “I did it; I achieved both dreams.”

“The dedicated people who contribute to NAFI publications elevate the entire flight training community,” Stanton said.

### ***About the National Association of Flight Instructors***

*Members of the National Association of Flight Instructors work as independent instructors, at flight schools, universities, FBOs, corporate flight departments, and in the military. Since 1967, NAFI and its members, who teach in countries around the globe, are dedicated to increasing and maintaining the professionalism of flight instruction.*

*NAFI members influence active pilots daily: Students working to become pilots, current pilots training to advance their skills with new ratings or certificates, and pilots who seek to improve their skills with recurrent training. NAFI also serves as an advocate with industry and government as a voice for flight instruction. NAFI helps shape the current and future direction of flight training.*

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