

*Dedicated to the Advancement of the International Helicopter Community*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Jan. 31, 2024

Contact: Dan Sweet

Phone: 703-683-4646

Email: [dan.sweet@rotor.org](mailto:dan.sweet@rotor.org)

## **HAI Adds New Salute To Excellence Award Honoring Harold Summers**

*Alexandria, Virginia (Jan. 31, 2024)* – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to announce a new addition to its Salute to Excellence Awards, which acknowledge significant achievement in the vertical flight industry. The newest award honors the spirit and legacy of Harold “Hal” Summers, a longtime HAI employee who was renowned for his efforts to improve the rotorcraft industry.

In recognition of her unwavering support for her late husband, the inaugural award recipient of the Harold Summers Legacy Award is Zhilin Summers. Presentation of the award will take place Feb. 26, 2024, at HAI HELI-EXPO 2024 in Anaheim, California.

“Our current Salute Awards recognize special achievement by individuals or groups throughout our industry,” says HAI President and CEO James Viola. “This new award recognizes Harold’s passion for the industry, particularly his enduring efforts to make every part of our industry better.”

Summers was a part of vertical aviation for over 60 years, entering the industry after earning his airframe and powerplant (A&P) certificate in 1960, then flying helicopters on the Alaska Pipeline. He joined Petroleum Helicopters Inc. (PHI) in 1964 as a mechanic–pilot, eventually rising to the role of VP of maintenance and engineering, in which he oversaw a massive fleet of aircraft globally that included more than 400 helicopters in the Gulf of Mexico alone. One significant achievement during his tenure with PHI was the implementation of health usage monitoring systems (HUMSs) in the organization’s fleet.

After 40 years with PHI, in 2004 Summers became HAI’s director of maintenance. While at the association, he dedicated the final 17 years of his life to improving the industry, serving as an active, vocal participant in countless HAI working groups, industry working groups, and national and international regulatory committees or working groups. His work took him across the river to Washington, D.C., back to the Gulf of Mexico, and around the world.

“Throughout his career, subordinates, peers, and leaders all recognized Harold’s ‘by-the-book’ work ethic,” adds Viola. “Except when he would disagree with ‘the book.’ Then, he was by-the-book in his efforts to change ‘the book.’ Because of his passion for our industry and his willingness to share his knowledge, our industry is indeed better as the results of his efforts.”

Summers never stopped working until his death in October 2021 at the age of 83. Ten years prior, he received the prestigious FAA Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award, recognizing 50 years of working in aircraft maintenance.

## MAINTENANCE EXCELLENCE

2-2-2-2

“HAI received numerous suggestions of methods to honor Harold’s spirit and his legacy,” says Viola. “We considered renaming existing awards in his honor, but nothing felt right. I am grateful to the HAI Technical and Maintenance Working Group—in which Harold participated—which proposed creating this new award to recognize extraordinary efforts to aid and improve our industry.”

Solicitation of nominations for the 2025 Salute to Excellence (STE) Harold Summers Legacy Award will open along with the other STE award nominations later this year.

##

*HAI is the professional trade association for the global helicopter industry and represents more than 1,100 companies and over 16,000 industry professionals in more than 65 countries. Each year, HAI members safely operate more than 3,700 helicopters and remotely piloted aircraft approximately 2.9 million hours. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective business tool that provides unique advantages to society and to the advancement of the international vertical aviation community.*