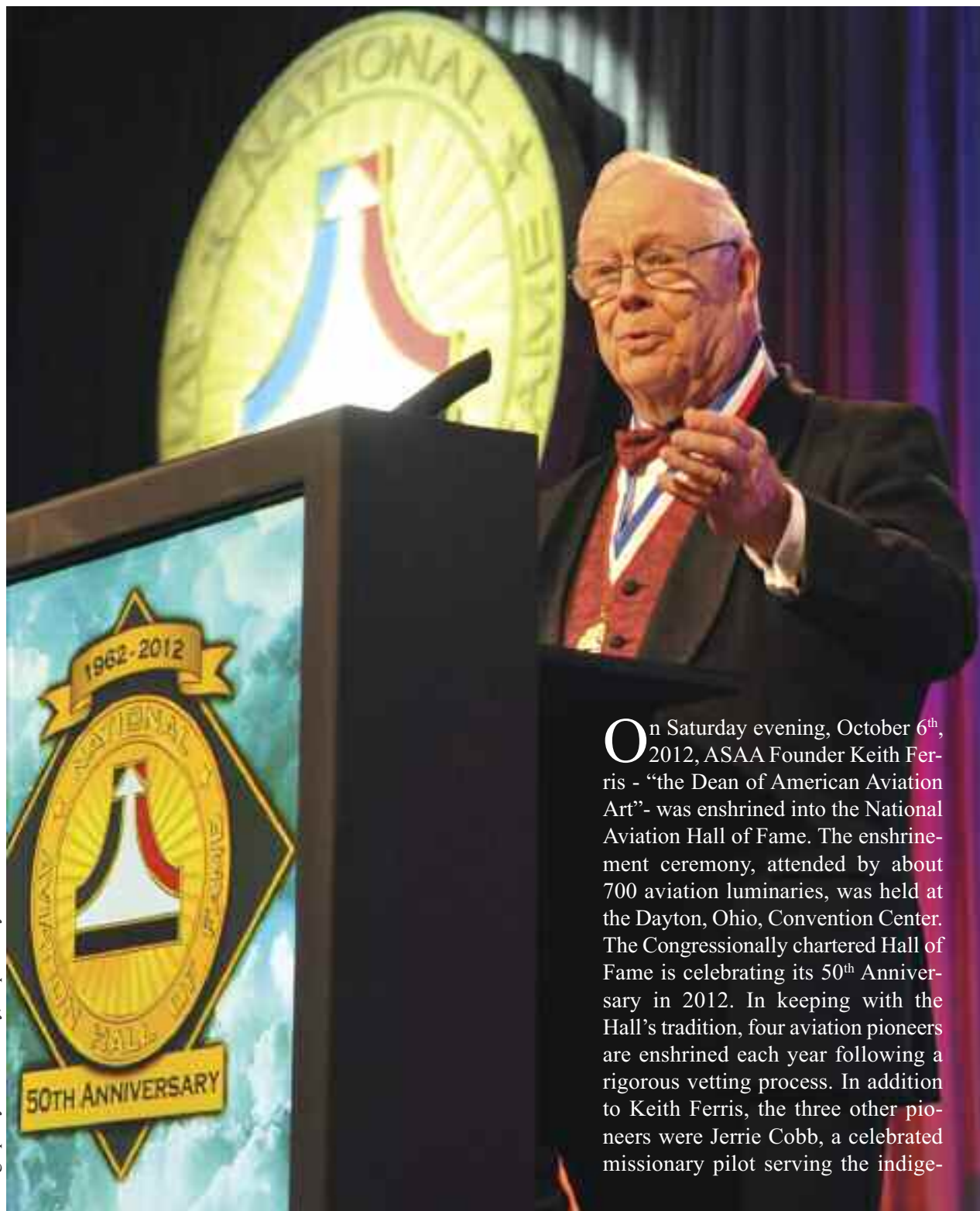


# Keith Ferris, ASAA Founder

## Enshrined into the National Aviation Hall of Fame



Photograph by Mike Ullery, Piqua Daily Call

On Saturday evening, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012, ASAA Founder Keith Ferris - “the Dean of American Aviation Art”- was enshrined into the National Aviation Hall of Fame. The enshrinement ceremony, attended by about 700 aviation luminaries, was held at the Dayton, Ohio, Convention Center. The Congressionally chartered Hall of Fame is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2012. In keeping with the Hall’s tradition, four aviation pioneers are enshrined each year following a rigorous vetting process. In addition to Keith Ferris, the three other pioneers were Jerrie Cobb, a celebrated missionary pilot serving the indige-

nous people of the Amazon Jungle and member of the Mercury Thirteen; Lt. General “Pete” Quesada, World War II combat leader and first Administrator of the FAA; and, Richard Whitcomb, aerospace engineer and designer of the Area Rule, the Supercritical Wing, and winglets at the Langley Research Center.

Keith was presented for Enshrinement by famed aviation author and former Director of the National Air and Space Museum Walter Boyne, a 2007 NAHF Enshrinee and good friend of the Ferrises. A number of members of ASAA were in attendance: John Clark, Sandy Allen, Mike and Nanette O’Neal, Kristin Hill and Craig Haberle, Jody and Jack Sjogren, Kurt and Susan Hofschneider, Eric and Kathy Boehm, Michelle Rouch and son, Spyro, and Charlie and Ann Cooper. In addition, there were many of Keith’s Air Force and aerospace industry friends to cheer him on.

As always, Keith was accompanied by his wonderful partner, Peggy, his wife of sixty years. They are a super team. Their children, Nancy and Todd with their spouses Bill Huggins and Julia Ferris were there with the four handsome grandchildren.

Charlie & Ann Cooper

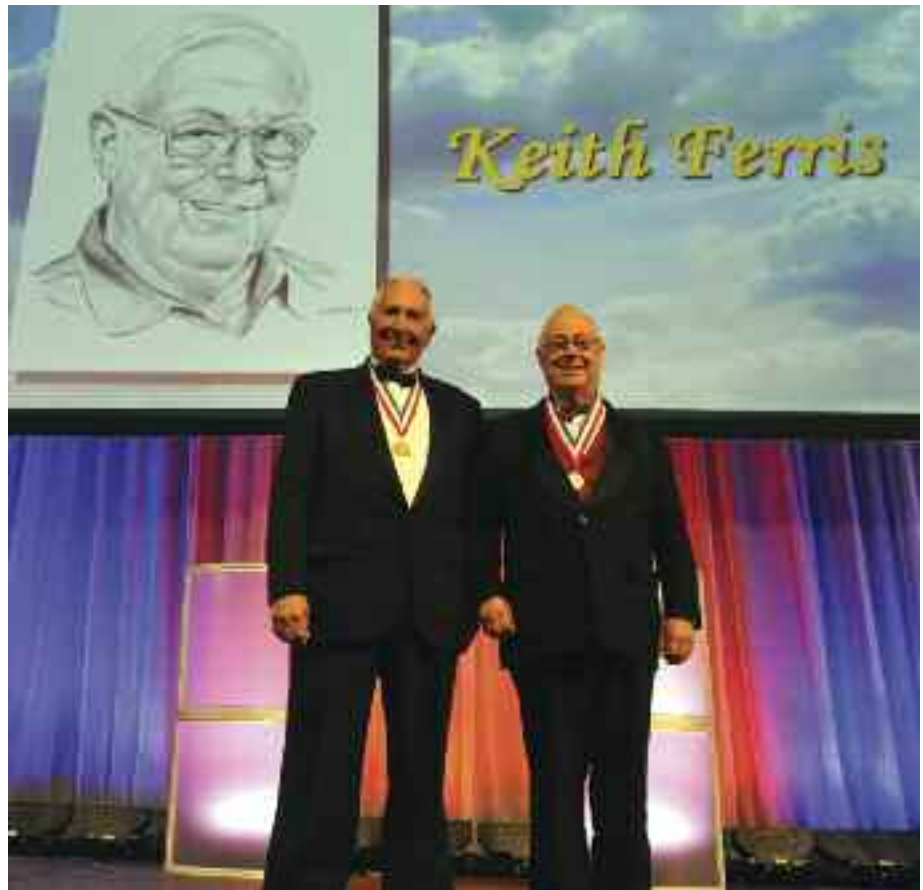


## DUAL RECOGNITION

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With the enshrinement of ASAA Founder Keith Ferris into the National Aviation Hall of Fame, Keith was recognized for his contributions to the field of aviation. This is a noteworthy achievement in all respects, one that is in keeping with the goal of this great organization.

From his early childhood, Keith has been immersed in aviation history. His father was a career military pilot



Photograph by Mike Ullery, Piqua Daily Call

Walter Boyne, aviation writer, former Director of the National Air & Space Museum, and a 2007 NAHF Enshrinee presents Keith Ferris for Enshrinement to the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

and being raised around airplanes all his life has added to Keith’s immense knowledge of all things aviation. Yet, there is another aspect to his life portfolio that I would argue has brought him to the attention of so many admirers - being an “artist.”

Keith has always believed in keeping things simple. From his early days working in an Air Force Publications office, he was exposed to the fundamental principles of color theory.

The inks used in offset lithography consisted of three primary colors: magenta, yellow, and cyan - plus black. When Keith later began painting in color, he remembered that observation and applied this hue combination to his painting. He reasoned, “If it worked for inks, why would it not work for painting?” Printing relies on

the white of the paper and Keith included white pigment with his palette of colors. He found that all three primaries together provided a controllable black. This simple recognition of a fundamental color tenet would become the hallmark of his paintings - the lifelong use of three primary colors closest to the printer’s inks for his work.

Another notable feature of Keith’s work has been the technical accuracy shown in his drawings and paintings. Individuals, corporations and artists have marveled at this technical accuracy. In an age where many artists relied on the camera as the source of their work, he needed a mechanism to “beat the competition” to make his work stand out as unique.

Keith again thought of keeping things simple. “If I look at an object

in space from a particular viewing position and knew its layout in three views, I should be able to draw that object from any viewing position in space.” This cognitive reasoning led him to employ a technique used by artists from the Renaissance on - the use of three-point perspective in drawing. His *descriptive geometry* knowledge produced scenes of remarkable composition and accuracy - a feature much appreciated by corporate clients and the general public. Again, Keith took a simple yet fundamental element of art and applied it to the modern genre of aviation art.

Artists are emotional creatures, and “feelings” are apart of our DNA. To capture the “feeling of flight” Keith found the experience of flying priceless in better injecting that emotional aspect into his paintings. He has achieved this by flying in almost every major aircraft in the U. S. Air Force inventory.

By combining his knowledge of aviation and the principles of art into a unique subset of conditions, he produces an expressive artistic format that integrates the cerebral with the practical.

Whenever one speaks the name, “Keith Ferris,” the image conjured up in the public’s mind is...“the Artist.” When the National Aviation Hall of Fame enshrined him into the organization, it represented a dual recognition. A man noted for his contributions to the field of aviation...and for the first time, an “artist” into their midst.



## Carlisle Keith Ferris



Keith Ferris Enshrinement biography courtesy of the National Aviation Hall of Fame. Drawing of Keith Ferris by Lonnie Ortega 2012.

Keith Ferris was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, on May 14, 1929, to Lt. Carlisle I. Ferris and Virginia Brecht Ferris stationed on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. Six months later the Ferris’ were transferred to the Air Corps Advanced Flying School at Kelly Field, Texas where the family grew to include twin daughters and another son.

While his father taught men to fly combat aircraft for six years, by the age of four, Keith was visiting the flight line across the street from their quarters, quizzing the crews of visiting aircraft as to aircraft type and home base. By the age of five Keith was drawing the airplanes he had seen to show his father what he had missed while he was on flying missions.

Following his father’s 1936 Air Corps Tactical School and 1937 Army Command and General Staff College graduations, his family moved to March Field in California. It was here on his tenth birthday that Keith experienced his first flight in his dad’s assigned Douglas B-18.

Keith entered Texas A&M in 1946 with the goal of earning an aeronautical engineering degree, an Air Force commission, and a career as an Air Force pilot. In 1947 Keith took a summer job with the Training Publications Unit at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. His drawing board was located in a World War II barracks on the flight line when the base celebrated “Air Force Day” with an open house on August 1<sup>st</sup>. It was there that Keith had his first encounter with jet aircraft – an experience that was to change his life.

Now sorely wanting to fly jets, he paid a visit to an old family friend, a flight surgeon with the School of Aviation Medicine. Could he pass the physical for flight training? The physician informed Keith that his allergy to egg protein and tetanus antitoxins would prevent his air force service. He suddenly found himself “drafted”... into civilian life.

Keith decided that he would live his dream through art. He spent another semester at A&M in Aeronautical Engineering before attending George Washington University and Corcoran College of Art in Washington, D.C. to learn anatomy and figure drawing.

In 1951, at the age of 22, he moved to St. Louis, first to work with Universal Printing Company, and then with the prestigious Cassell Watkins Paul Art Studio, both firms having Air Force Publications contracts. Being steeped in Air Force terminology, he was put in charge of the studio’s Air Force contracts, acting as a liaison between the studio and the military. Keith felt right at home, producing artwork for the next five years for training and nuclear weapons manuals.

In 1953 he married Peggy Todd, soon welcoming their daughter, Nancy, and son Todd.

When in 1956 the Air Force closed its publications unit in St. Louis, Keith packed up his family and, moving to



the New York area, became a freelance artist serving the aerospace industry's airframe, engine and avionics manufacturers, their advertising agencies, public relations firms, aerospace museums and the military.

In 1960 he was invited to join the prestigious Society of Illustrators where he discovered the society's Air Force Art Program. The Air Force Art Program has allowed Keith to fly while participating in the Air Force mission throughout the world for over fifty years, offering him the opportunity to actually fly the jets he loves so much.

He flew combat missions in both Southeast Asia and Bosnia. In return Keith has donated 62 of his original paintings to the Air Force Art Collection as well as several others to the Navy, Marines and the Coast Guard. His award winning artwork has been widely published and originals displayed in the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of the USAF, among many other museums.

As an inventor of aircraft camouflage and high visibility paint schemes, Keith holds five U.S. patents and four foreign patents. Many of the current Air Force, Navy and foreign aircraft include his high and low visibility paint systems.

Keith is founder and past president of the American Society of Aviation Artists, which for 26 years has conducted annual international educational aviation art forums and shows for artists. Through educating and mentoring others, and visually documenting flight, Keith believes he has found a way to serve his country after all.

The National Aviation Hall of Fame is honored to welcome this distinguished artist, historian, aviator, inventor, and teacher – “the “Dean of American Aviation Art” – Keith Ferris.



Fifty years ago, five Daytonians shared a vision that America's air and space pioneers should be properly honored and their legacies preserved. Those five – James W. Jacobs, Gregory C. Karas, John A. Lombard, Larry E. O'Neil and Gerald E. Weller – established the Aviation Hall of Fame as a non-profit, Ohio corporation on October 6, 1962. The inaugural enshrinement ceremony, held in December 1962, celebrated the accomplishments of Orville and Wilbur Wright.

Soon, aviation leaders from across the country joined the founding incorporators in petitioning the United States Congress to grant the organization national stature, and what is now the National Aviation Hall of Fame (NAHF) received its charter in 1964. Over time the NAHF has evolved well beyond simply recognizing and preserving the achievements of its honorees. It now serves an expanded purpose – using those rich legacies to foster our nation's future aerospace leaders and innovators, and guide each of us in our quest for excellence and to be of service to our fellow man.

Philip A. Roberts, Chairman of the Board NAHF



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National Aviation Hall of Fame Enshrinement October 6, 2012