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AIAA MOURNS THE DEATH OF DICK WHITCOMB

Award-Winning Pioneer of Aviation Science was an AIAA Honorary Fellow

October 14, 2009 – Reston, Va. – The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) mourns the death of aviation science pioneer and AIAA Honorary Fellow Richard T. “Dick” Whitcomb. Dr. Whitcomb passed away in Newport News, Va. on October 13, 2009, at the age of 86.

AIAA president Dave Thompson stated: “Richard ‘Dick’ Whitcomb’s tenacious pursuit of ways to make planes fly farther, faster, and with less fuel use, resulted in the aviation industry that we rely on today to move humanity around the world. Without his development of the transonic area rule, the supercritical wing, or the winglet, aviation as we know it would not exist. His efforts place him forever in the firmament of outstanding aviation pioneers and, as we mourn his loss, we salute his life and efforts on behalf of aeronautical science.”

Among Dr. Whitcomb’s many honors were the 1965 Collier Trophy for his development of the transonic area rule (also known as the Whitcomb area rule), which revolutionized the construction of aircraft fuselages; the 1970 AIAA Reed Aeronautics Award; the 1973 National Medal of Science; and the 2001 Daniel Guggenheim Medal.

AIAA is the world’s largest technical society dedicated to the global aerospace profession. With more than 35,000 individual members worldwide, and 90 corporate members, AIAA brings together industry, academia, and government to advance engineering and science in aviation, space, and defense. For more information, visit www.aiaa.org.

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