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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRYAN GUTRAJ EARNS NAFI MASTER INSTRUCTOR ACCREDITATION

KALAMAZOO, MI — 11/09/2022 The National Association of Flight Instructors is proud to announce that NAFI member Bryan Gutraj has earned accreditation as a NAFI Associate Master Flight Instructor.

Born in Waukegan, Illinois, Gutraj's passion for aviation began as a child on a commercial cross-country flight on United Airlines to Disneyland. Later, he studied accounting at Eastern Illinois University and began his private pilot training shortly after graduation. While



attending law school in Chicago, Gutraj would take the Orange Line "L" to Midway Airport for flight lessons in his "free time" and earned his private pilot certificate in 1998 at Midway. He went on to earn his instrument rating at Stick and Rudder Flying Club in Waukegan. He took a hiatus from aviation for a few years while he built his law and accounting firms in Illinois.

Although Gutraj did not log many hours over the next decade, he stayed close to aviation by assisting pilots, aircraft owners, mechanics, flight schools, and others with their business, tax, and estate planning matters. Finally, thanks to the persistence of several of those clients, he decided to return to his passion for flying and began working on his commercial pilot certificate in a Cessna 182RG based in Marshfield, Wisconsin. He has since added a multi-engine rating and CFI, CFII, and MEI to his certificates.

Although Gutraj's pilot and flight instructor training was conducted almost exclusively in old school steam gauge six pack Cessnas, at the urging of one of his clients, he took the Cirrus Aircraft Advanced Transition course in the modern G1000 glass cockpit Cirrus SR22 G6 airplane. Following that certification, Gutraj has amassed nearly 200 hours in various Cirrus aircraft flying missions all around the continental United States.

With his newly-minted flight instructor certificate, and at the outset of the COVID pandemic, Gutraj decided to take a sabbatical from practicing law and accepted a flight instructor position in the

University of Dubuque (UD) Part 141 aviation program. At UD, he instructed a broad spectrum of students from student pilots through multi-engine instructor candidates in the University's G1000 single engine Cessna Skyhawks and multi-engine Piper Seminole.

Following the results of a nationwide survey of flight students in 2021 conducted by the Aircraft Owner's and Pilots Association (AOPA), Gutraj was awarded Distinguished Flight Instructor honors from the AOPA for the Central Southwest region. With more than 100,000 flight instructors nationwide, the AOPA bestowed this honor on the top 100. The award recognizes the highest levels of achievement in the flight training community, with the goal of encouraging others to adopt similar characteristics of success.

Later in 2021, the FAA awarded Gutraj its Gold Seal designation, which is issued to flight instructors who have maintained a high level of flight training activity and who meet special criteria with a proven track record of excellent performance. When he is not flight instructing or practicing law in Illinois, he can be found flying around the country with his rescue dog Shelby in a Cessna 210.

Gutraj also serves as an FAA Safety Team representative and is active in EAA Chapter 327 as a member of its scholarship committee and Young Eagles Flight volunteer. Gutraj credits several other CFIs who have supported him in his journey to become a flight instructor. "The legendary Wisconsin DPE Duffy Gaier and CFI Howard Joling were both instrumental in helping me hone my skills as a commercial pilot and flight instructor applicant," he said. "University of Dubuque's chief flight instructor Suzanne Peterson took a leap of faith in hiring a very green instructor with only Part 61 experience from outside the university's program. Mrs. Peterson has also been extremely patient in mentoring me from a new flight instructor into an Associate Master CFI. Finally, a dear friend, pilot and instructor, Charles Kalvoda, has always been there throughout the past decade offering words of encouragement to support my passion for aviation."

*The **NAFI Master Flight Instructor Accreditation** is earned by aviation educators based upon a system of advanced professional standards and peer review. The accreditation identifies and publicly recognizes those teachers of flight who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to excellence, professional growth, and service to the aviation community. The NAFI Master Instructor accreditation is for two years and may be used to renew an FAA flight instructor certificate. Applicants must have been a CFI for two years and have given 1,000 hours of flight instruction. In addition, candidates must meet and document activity in four NAFI Master Instructor categories (Instructor, Educator, Service to the Aviation Community, and Professional Activity).*

*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 30 countries, 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. For more information about NAFI or the NAFI Master Instructor program call **866-806-6156** or visit www.NAFINet.org.*