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NEWS

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Kennett Recognized with Lyman Award

Arlington, Va. – Douglas Kennett, a longtime public relations practitioner with more than four decades experience, has been selected to receive the 2011 Lauren D. Lyman Award for outstanding achievement in aerospace communications.

As a U.S. Air Force public affairs officer for nearly thirty years, Kennett held many senior assignments including spokesman for U.S. forces in the United Kingdom, director of media relations for the Air Force and director of Defense Information at the Pentagon. Retiring to join McDonnell Douglas Corporation in 1996, he coordinated the surprise announcement of the merger late that year with The Boeing Company. He later worked as vice president of communications for Boeing's Aircraft and Missiles division in St. Louis before returning to the company's Washington, D.C. office in 2002. He retired from Boeing in December 2010.

Kennett handled many high profile media situations, including a multiple day commercial aircraft hijacking in Korea in 1969 and calming public fears over potential microwave hazards from a new Air Force ballistic missile warning radar in 1979. This later effort earned Major Kennett the Aviation and Space Writers award as the top public information officer in the federal government. As director of public affairs for the Air Force Systems Command, Colonel Kennett led all aspects of media access for the then controversial B-2 Stealth Bomber, to include the unveiling and first flight in the late 1980s. Later as a senior Defense Department briefer, he was lead spokesman on two trips for Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, first to former Communist countries in Eastern Europe and then to Rwanda in the aftermath of genocide.

"Doug faced some tough, high-pressure media environments during his career," said Marty Hauser, director of government communications at UTC. "He always faced them with one goal in mind – to ensure journalists got the facts they needed and access to tell the aerospace story, both good and bad."

A former chair of the AIA Washington Public Relations Committee, Kennett mentored many military and civilian public affairs professionals to help them more actively engage the media throughout his career. He also mentored young journalists learning their craft while covering the Pentagon and the aerospace industry.

Kennett will receive the award at AIA's Annual 47th Year-End Review and Forecast luncheon Dec. 14.

The award is named after Lauren "Deac" Lyman, a Pulitzer-prize winning aviation reporter with the New York Times who later had a distinguished career as a public relations executive with United Aircraft, a predecessor to United Technologies Corporation. First awarded in 1972, the prize goes to a journalist or public relations professional in aviation who exhibits Lyman's high standard of excellence. UTC is the longtime sponsor of the award.