



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

April 4, 2011

William M. LeoGrande
Office of the Dean
School of Public Affairs, Ward 310
American University
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20016-8022

Subject: Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership

Dear Dean LeoGrande:

It is my privilege and honor to nominate Margaret "Peggy" Gilligan for the Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership. I am enclosing a biography and formal award nomination for your consideration.

As the Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety, Peggy Gilligan is one of the most valuable members of FAA's senior executive leadership team and is recognized as a highly respected and seasoned professional throughout the aviation industry. She has been instrumental in influencing and leading change and instilling improvements in aviation safety throughout her extraordinary 31-year career.

In addition to her reputation as a model leader and advocate for aviation safety, she has also been acknowledged for her personal commitment to the employees of the agency. She is a trusted leader, mentor, and a superb public servant who inspires those around her through vision, knowledge, and dedication.

Thank you for this opportunity to publically recognize how much we value Peggy Gilligan's commitment and contributions.

Sincerely,

J. Randolph Babbitt
Administrator

Enclosures

2011 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Nomination of Margaret “Peggy” Gilligan
Biography and Awards

Margaret “Peggy” Gilligan became the Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety on January 5, 2009. Since joining the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 1980, she has served in numerous positions supporting the advancement of aviation safety both in the United States and throughout the world.

Peggy began her FAA career as an attorney in the Eastern Region, successfully trying numerous complex, high profile cases, including the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Association (PATCO) strike cases. Her intelligence, understanding of aviation law, broad knowledge of the FAA, and abilities were quickly recognized and viewed as a tremendous asset by her superiors at Headquarters in Washington, DC. In 1987, she brought her expertise to Washington, serving as the Special Assistant to the Chief Counsel from 1987-1988 before taking on the responsibilities as the Acting Special Counsel and Acting Chief of Staff in 1988. From 1990-1995, she served four different FAA Administrators as the Chief of Staff. During this time, she also served the Deputy Secretary for the Department of Transportation as the Special Counsel on a special six-month detail. In 1995, she was named the Deputy Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety, and after serving for over 13 years in that position, she became the Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety in 2009.

As Associate Administrator, Peggy leads the organization responsible for setting, overseeing, and enforcing safety standards for all parts of the aviation industry, including airlines, manufacturers, repair stations, pilots, mechanics, air traffic controllers, flight attendants, and any person or product that operates in the national airspace system. These programs have a direct impact on every facet of domestic and international civil aviation safety.

Peggy oversees critical Aviation Safety programs executed by a workforce of more than 7,000 employees located in Washington Headquarters, regional and directorate offices, and more than 125 field offices throughout the world. She also oversees the organization's annual budget of more than \$1 billion.

Peggy serves as the government co-chair of the Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST) — a joint industry/government group committed to improving aviation safety by reducing the risk of accidents.

In May 2009, Peggy and her Industry co-chair accepted the coveted Robert J. Collier Trophy in recognition of CAST’s work in developing an integrated data-driven strategy that reduced aviation fatalities in the United States by 83 percent over 10 years.

In April 2006, Peggy and her Industry co-chair received the prestigious Laurel Award from *Aviation Week & Space Technology* magazine for improving aviation safety and “reducing the risk of fatalities in world aviation” through CAST. The annual award

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recognizes the extraordinary accomplishments of individuals and teams in aviation, aerospace, and defense.

In 2006, she was named Manager of the Year by the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE). The award cited her dedication to promoting diversity in hiring and recruiting through outreach efforts with the NHCFAE Airman Database Project.

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Peggy was selected to serve as the government lead on the Rapid Response Team (RRT) for Aircraft Security. The US Secretary of Transportation created this RRT to increase the security of commercial airplane cockpits. Peggy led a team of FAA experts and private-sector team members in developing and implementing a plan to retrofit more than 6,000 commercial airplanes with hardened cockpit doors. Peggy's leadership in accomplishing this crucial task within 18 months earned her the Department of Transportation Secretary's Meritorious Achievement Award.

Peggy has made notable contributions to aviation safety over the course of her career, beginning as a staff attorney in the FAA's Eastern Region and extending all the way to her present position as a senior executive. A consummate leader and team player, she has frequently placed the needs of her country and the FAA above her own. Over her career, she has received numerous awards, including the DOT Secretary's Award for Meritorious Achievement in 1990 and Senior Executive Service Performance Awards in 1993 and 1994.

She is a 1979 graduate of Boston University School of Law and a 1975 graduate of Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY. She is also a member of the New York State Bar Association.

2011 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Nomination of Margaret “Peggy” Gilligan
Commitment to Effective Continuity of Government

If you asked Peggy Gilligan to list her accomplishments, she would tell you what *we* have done as an organization. That is because Peggy is a devoted public servant who exemplifies “service before self” and who believes success is always a team effort.

As a senior executive in the aviation community who has played critical roles in the advancement of aviation safety throughout her career, Peggy has a profound understanding of nearly every facet of the FAA. Yet, if probed, Peggy would most likely refer to herself as a journeyman — someone who has learned her craft well, who is reliable and experienced but not necessarily brilliant. In truth, though, Peggy is a master craftsman in the tradition of master craftsmen — passing on the stories and values of her craft and a lifetime of knowledge and experience through example.

As the Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety, she leads her team by embracing and encouraging a culture of collaboration, cooperation, and the sharing of information, ideas, lessons learned, and best practices. She relies on her diverse senior executive team and subject matter experts to bring their individual expertise to the table and work together to find the most effective path ahead for the organization.

As a senior executive who worked her way up through the ranks, Peggy is a vocal champion of mentoring both new and seasoned employees across all levels of the workforce and counseling attorneys and colleagues throughout the aviation community. She never passes up the opportunity to talk with a training class, participate on a panel discussion, speak to an organization or association, or sit down one-on-one with an employee who seeks her counsel.

Since taking on the responsibility of serving as the Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety, Peggy has put a significant focus on improving workforce engagement through enhanced communication and training efforts. As a result, Aviation Safety saw a positive increase in the 2010 Federal Viewpoint (FedView) survey of the “Best Places to Work in Government.” In fact, Aviation Safety scored higher than the rest of the FAA and most of the Federal government in all areas, and that can be directly attributed to the strides Peggy has taken in transforming the culture of the organization.

Peggy hosted the first-ever Aviation Safety Middle Managers Conference in Washington, DC in 2010 to better engage middle managers and equip them and empower them to become more effective leaders. She also hosts an annual Aviation Safety All Managers Conference to share insights and best practices and work together to find solutions to the common challenges managers face across Aviation Safety.

When she was named the Associate Administrator of Aviation Safety, one of her first decisions was to commit herself and her senior management team to dividing into teams of two and visiting every field office across Aviation Safety to gain a better

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understanding of the unique challenges facing the field. This is an opportunity for senior executives to build open communication channels with employees in the field and determine ways for the senior executive team to provide improved support to the field.

Peggy also hosts monthly Brown Bag lunches with employees at Headquarters. These small group lunches allow employees to share what is on their minds, ask Peggy and her deputy questions, and share information across the Services and Offices.

She holds quarterly Town Halls, broadcast live across the organization, to provide her entire team with an update on the state of the organization and to address any relevant issues facing the team. She takes live questions from the audience as well as via email, and she makes a point to engage her audience in an open, honest discussion. This was especially significant during the Town Hall in January 2011 when Peggy talked with her team about the funding crisis facing the Federal government and the significant steps the organization was having to take to prepare for a reduction in resources, including a hiring freeze and the possibility of furloughs. Management Analyst Felisa White noted, "I was amazed that a senior leader was willing to talk so frankly about so many sensitive issues that are such real concerns for the workforce. But Peggy did, and then she promised to follow up with us as Congress decides on a budget and the FAA figures out the way ahead. It said a lot about her character and leadership style that she was willing to take on such heavy issues in such a public forum."

To help new employees gain a broader understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Aviation Safety organization, Peggy had her training team create the New Employees Overview Orientation session. The genesis of the program is to give new employees a jumpstart on becoming fully contributing members of the organization. It introduces employees to the mission and values of the organization, and facilitates their understanding of how their individual job contributes to the overall achievement of the FAA mission.

Peggy also rallied her team to develop the New Managers Course, which helps rookie managers transition into their new roles. The course focuses on teaching managers critical thinking techniques so they can more easily navigate managing people in a constantly changing aviation, government and agency environment. Along with her senior management team, Peggy sits on panels during the New Employee Orientation and the New Managers Course to give the participants the opportunity to learn from and ask senior executives questions.

She is a vocal champion of the FAA's Program for Emerging Leaders (PEL), which helps prepare employees for future leadership roles. The 18-month structured career development program is targeted toward employees who aspire to become managers. Peggy decided to take the program up a notch for Aviation Safety participants, personalizing the program by adding a Frontline Managers Course, a 120-day detail, and additional leadership workshops.

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Commitment to Effective Continuity of Government

She instituted the Aviation Safety National Awards Program to recognize individual employees and teams for their contributions to safety and their commitment to public service.

Peggy is also involved on the FAA National Labor-Management Forum that is responsible for modeling collaborative behavior, providing leadership, sharing best practices, and developing templates regarding pre-decisional union involvement and collaboration. She also spearheaded an endeavor among her Aviation Safety Management team to improve and establish more collaborative Labor Relations partnerships through open and honest communication and training managers to understand all bargaining unit contract requirements that impact their work units.

Peggy's belief in the immeasurable value and honor of public service is unwavering, and she has dedicated her career to improving aviation safety without ever drawing attention to her own individual achievements. She promotes a team mentality throughout her organization, and she leads by example. Aviation is safer and the Aviation Safety organization is better, stronger, and more effective because of Peggy Gilligan. That is a commitment to the effective continuity of government that we should all seek to emulate.

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Organizational Achievement

Margaret “Peggy” Gilligan is from a rare breed of public servants who skillfully combines deep personal humility with intense professional will to achieve the organization’s mission and strategic goals without ever drawing attention to her own vital contributions. Serving as the Federal Aviation Administration’s Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety, Peggy masterfully shoulders the critical responsibility of ensuring the safety of the national airspace system, and it is no coincidence that under her careful watch air travel has become the safest mode of transportation available today.

At any given minute, there are 5,000 aircraft flying in our national airspace system, and yet there was not a single commercial passenger fatality in the United States last year. The International Air Transport Association went so far as to call 2010 the safest year in aviation history for passengers flying on Western-built aircraft. However, these achievements are not the result of good luck. Rather, they are the result of good leadership, hard work, quality data, and an unwavering commitment to making air travel safer tomorrow than it is today.

An attorney by trade, Peggy’s attention to detail, staggering intellect, voracious appetite for knowledge, dedication to the mission, and sound judgment have made her a recognized asset throughout the Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and global aviation community. Over her 31-year FAA career, she has proven herself as a “go-to” person who can be counted on in a crisis to step up and step in and do what has to be done to ensure aviation safety is maintained or improved and never compromised. As a result of her trusted counsel, she served as the chief of staff for four FAA Administrators under different politically controlled Presidential Administrations, an unheard of achievement in such a partisan climate.

What makes Peggy unique, though, is how calmly, quietly, and determinedly she has managed to ascend the career ladder from an attorney in the Eastern Region to a Senior Executive in Washington, DC. Her career is a testament to what can be achieved when someone looks beyond promoting themselves to advancing the organization and supporting its mission. Although she is still in the midst of a very successful career, she has already established her legacy in aviation.

Since its inception in 1998, Peggy has co-chaired a voluntary industry and government partnership called the Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST). CAST formed in the late 1990s in response to a government and industry challenge by the 1997 White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security report to reduce the commercial aviation accident rate by 80 percent over 10 years. CAST quickly focused on this ambitious goal, originally deemed by many as virtually unattainable. Since then, the team has relentlessly analyzed data to proactively identify critical safety enhancements that greatly reduce accident risk and ultimately save lives. As a result, by 2008, CAST managed to reduce the risk in fatal commercial accidents by 83 percent.

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However, it is important to note that this happened during one of the greatest crises in the history of aviation. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on America, US airlines voluntarily stepped up and committed to embracing the CAST safety agenda. Under Peggy's leadership, CAST clearly demonstrated that appropriately constructed, risk-based safety management is good business, saving the industry money and, most importantly, saving lives.

As the demand for air travel continues to increase, with US airlines alone projected to hit the one-billion passengers-per-year mark within the next decade, the sheer volume of flights expected in the near future requires greater emphasis on acquiring, sharing, and analyzing aviation safety data in a collaborative environment. Since 2008, CAST has redirected its efforts to pursue ever-higher safety levels for commercial aviation. The charter was expanded to include a focus on identifying and prioritizing emerging aviation safety issues and threats, prioritizing them, and adopting mitigating actions to prevent accidents.

Based on a decade of hard-earned trust and confidence working together under Peggy's leadership, industry and government CAST members now share sensitive safety information in a protected environment. And the Aviation Safety Information Analysis and Sharing program (ASIAS) launched in 2007 greatly expands the information sharing partnership among manufacturers, operators, and analysts. Currently, 35 member airlines participate in ASIAS, ensuring crucial safety information is gathered from a number of data sources. Sophisticated analysis tools then scrutinize that data to detect trends, identify precursors, and assess risks.

Advocating collaboration, cooperation, and bipartisan commitment, Peggy manages to bring safety experts and representatives to the table from the FAA, NASA, Defense Department, Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), Allied Pilots Association (APA), Air Transport Association (ATA), Flight Safety Foundation (FSF), National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), National Air Carriers Association (NACA), Regional Airline Association (RAA), large aircraft manufacturers, and engine manufacturers. As a result, CAST has successfully implemented 76 enhancements, and their work continues.

Noted then CAST Industry co-chair and former Vice President of Flight Operations for United Airlines Hank Krakowski, "I was honored to serve with Peggy as the co-chair of CAST for a number of years. She has been the leadership focus of this award-winning effort over CAST's entire history, and she has been successful because she constantly drove consensus and commitment from the members, which demonstrates her unparalleled leadership style. As a result, we were able to achieve something that no one thought could be done, and countless lives have been saved because we made aviation safer for generations to come."

Although focused primarily on the US aviation system, throughout its history, CAST has reached out internationally to help improve aviation safety around the world. This is

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evidenced by the international participation in CAST, including the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and Transport Canada Civil Aviation (TCCA). CAST’s impact and leadership can be seen by the resulting formation and actions of many cooperative regional safety alliances, modeled after CAST and working to incorporate CAST results and by the international acceptance of its principles in the ICAO global safety roadmap.

In 2009, Peggy and her industry co-chair accepted the prestigious Robert J. Collier Trophy on behalf of CAST. Then NAA President Jonathan Gaffney noted at the time, “CAST serves as a model and a conduit for safety around the world. Its impact is simply remarkable.”

Yet, Peggy’s contributions to aviation reach well beyond CAST. She continuously supports FAA-led safety enhancements, including working with industry engine companies to issue airworthiness directives requiring mandatory non-destructive inspection of critical rotating parts and overseeing the FAA effort that developed, and continues to use, standard operating procedures to prevent controlled flight into terrain (CFIT) approach and landing accidents.

She also makes significant contributions in AVS rulemaking activities. She has articulated and defended several complex issues, including the rewrite of the Flight and Duty regulation, completion of the Commuter Training Rule, development of options documentation for the Age 60 Rule decision, development of the new pilot training regulations, and rewrite of the pilot medical standards. Her thorough knowledge of the FAA, her extensive legal background in aviation, and her ability to negotiate major aviation safety issues have been invaluable in support of these regulatory initiatives. The Director of the Office of Rulemaking Pam Hamilton noted, “Peggy continues to be an outstanding advocate for the FAA’s Rulemaking program, ensuring we are setting the right standards to achieve the best possible safety outcomes for the traveling public while minimizing the effect on the regulated parties.”

Peggy was also instrumental in the FAA becoming the first and largest federal agency to achieve certification to the prestigious International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This certification ensures FAA safety offices worldwide provide standardized services and products, and adhere to the same safety standards as those businesses they regulate.

Peggy’s contributions to aviation safety over the last 31 years are a testament to her unwavering belief that although aviation is the safest it has ever been, her job is to continue to make it safer. If your committee seeks to honor a humble and profoundly gifted senior executive who is dedicated to serving the public by ensuring air travel is safe anytime and anywhere an airplane flies, then you need look no further than Peggy Gilligan. Peggy truly exemplifies the very best of public service, and she is most deserving of the prestigious Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership.