

Chasing Earhart panel planned for Saturday at BC

Editor's note: Below is a press release issued by Atchison's Benedictine College about the Amelia Earhart Festival events planned on the college campus.

Among them is the [Chasing Earhart](#) panel. MSC Radio News Director Brian Hagen on July 14 had a chance to talk to Chasing Earhart founder Chris Williamson about the panel. That interview is also embedded below.

ATCHISON, KAN. - On Saturday, July 21, 2018, Benedictine College will host a number of events for the annual Amelia Earhart Festival, including a book signing with Earhart authors, the Speakers Symposium, the Pioneering Achievement Award Luncheon and “Chasing Earhart: The Discussion Panel.” Information on these events, along with the concerts, carnival, museum tours, fireworks display and more can be found [here](#).

The Discussion Panel event, created by Chris Williamson, founder of the Chasing Earhart Project, is new this year and will feature more than a dozen experts who will both celebrate the life of Amelia Earhart and discuss her disappearance, her impact and her legacy. The discussion will take place in O'Malley-McAllister Auditorium on the college's Atchison, Kan., campus beginning at 2 p.m. The event is free and open to the public, but due to space limitations, tickets are required for entry. Tickets can be obtained on the Chasing Earhart website at <https://chasingearhart.app.rsvpify.com/>.

“We are honored to be bringing an event to the public that is both historic and exciting with some of the most incredible guests that the Amelia Earhart Festival has ever seen,” Williamson said.

Panelists brought to Atchison by the Amelia Earhart Festival include:

- **Kate Jerome, author of *Who Was Amelia Earhart?***
- **Jessica Cox, the world's first armless pilot and 2018 Amelia Earhart Pioneer Achievement Award recipient**
- **Bill Snavely, author of *Tracking Amelia Earhart, Her Flightpath to the End***
- **Tom King, senior archeologist for The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR)**
- **Dick Spink, participant in the History Channel's documentary, "Amelia Earhart: The Lost Evidence"**
- **Sammie Morris, head of Archives and Special Collections for Purdue University's library**
- **Gary Lapook, world renowned authority on celestial navigation**
- **Tom Dettweiler, former VP at Nauticos who helped locate the Titanic**
- **Ann Pellegrino, female pilot who retraced and completed Earhart's flight path in 1967**
- **Lisa Cotham, secretary for The Ninety-Nines: International Organization of Women Pilots**
- **Larry Inman, owner of the largest private Earhart memorabilia collection in the world**
- **Shaesta Waiz, the youngest woman to fly solo around the world in a single-engine aircraft**
- **Abigail Harrison, popularly known as Astronaut Abby, the founder of The Mars Generation**
- **Douglas Westfall, author of *The Hunt for Amelia Earhart: America's Greatest Search***
- **Scott Philbrook and Forrest Burgess, founders and co-hosts of the Astonishing Legends podcast**

"This panel will be a representation of the Chasing Earhart documentary and

project guests that are featured in the largest scale Amelia Earhart project ever created,” said Williamson. “Each guest brings a unique and fascinating background to the panel; discussing how Amelia impacts them personally and professionally.”

Amelia Earhart set many flying records and championed the advancement of women in aviation. She became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean and served as the first president of The Ninety-Nines: International Organization of Women Pilots. During a Purdue University-funded flight to circumnavigate the globe in July 1937, Earhart disappeared somewhere over the Pacific Ocean. Her plane wreckage was never found and she was officially declared lost at sea. Her disappearance remains one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of the twentieth century.

Earhart was born in Atchison and the city features the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum in her childhood home. The city is also home to “Muriel,” a 1935 Lockheed Electra L-10-E, which was the same model plane Earhart flew on her final voyage and is the only remaining such aircraft. Each year, the festival awards the Pioneering Achievement Award and this year’s recipient is Jessica Cox, the only armless pilot in aviation history. She will speak during the Symposium, at the award luncheon, and on the Chasing Earhart panel.

Events at Benedictine College on Saturday, July 21, include:

- 9:00 a.m. – Breakfast with the Books on the first floor of the St. John Paul II Student Center. FREE Visit with the authors of a number of Amelia Earhart books and get books signed.**
- 10:15 a.m. – Speakers Symposium in O’Malley-McAllister Auditorium inside the St. John Paul II Student Center. FREE Hear from Jessica Cox, Pioneering Achievement Award recipient; Abigail Harrison, founder of The MARS Generation; and Shaesta Waiz, the youngest woman to fly solo around the world in a single engine aircraft.**
- 12:00 p.m. – Pioneering Achievement Award Luncheon in the Benedictine College Dining Hall. \$20 and reservations are requested (call 800-234-1854).**
- 2:00 p.m. – Chasing Earhart: The Discussion Panel in O’Malley-McAllister Auditorium inside the St. John Paul II Student Center. FREE with ticket.**

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