COL. NICOLE MALACHOWSKI, USAF (RET.)

Col. Nicole Malachowski, USAF (Ret.) defies stereotypes. Yes, she was a jet fighter pilot, but if you think you know her based on that, you'd be wrong. A leader, a combat veteran, the first woman pilot on the Thunderbirds Air Demonstration Squadron, a White House Fellow, and an inductee into both the National Women's Hall of Fame and the Women in Aviation International Pioneer Hall of Fame – she even has a *Star Trek* Federation starship named after her, the USS Malachowski (NCC-1619). Nicole's distinguished 21-year Air Force career exceeded her wildest dreams. But the dream came to an end when a devastating tick-borne illness left her struggling greatly to speak or walk for almost nine months. An indomitable spirit, Nicole fought back against overwhelming odds and prevailed. Drawing on stories from her career and personal life, Nicole inspires audiences to rethink the challenges they face every day. She urges them to go beyond resilience and become resurgent. Nicole's message empowers people with three key beliefs: failure and risk are the price of entry for achieving something great; sometimes you need to yield to overcome; and her personal mantra – "Nobody wants to lead a scripted life."

Nicole brings her experience to the stage and holds audiences spellbound with an easygoing authenticity of someone who's achieved greatness. She's been a member and leader of elite-performing teams and has faced overwhelming challenges and adversity and has come out on top. Her presentations offer stories on the human behaviors and cultures required for elite team performance, because that's where real results are built.

While other high school students were practicing for their driver's license, Nicole was accumulating flight time. She was sixteen years old when she took her first solo flight and from that point on there was no stopping her. While in high school, she joined the Civil Air Patrol and participated in Air Force Junior ROTC. Nicole's professional story began when she earned her commission from the United States Air Force Academy in 1996. Following graduation, she attended Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT) at Columbus AFB, MS and began her career as a pilot. Competitively selected to fly combat aircraft, she was among the first group of women to fly modern fighter jets. As a career pilot, she served in combat as an F-15E Flight Commander, Evaluator, Instructor Pilot and Flight Lead. Over her 21-year career, Nicole achieved the rating of Command Pilot with over 2,300 flight hours in six different Air Force aircraft. She was also selected to fly as Thunderbird #3 with the USAF Air Demonstration Squadron – the first woman to fly on any Department of Defense military jet demonstration squadron. Colonel Malachowski has served as a mission ready fighter pilot in three operational F-15E fighter squadrons and has flown over 188 combat hours, including her proudest moment as a fighter pilot: leading the first fighter formation to provide security for Iraq's historic democratic elections in 2005.

On the ground, Nicole was a White House Fellow, class of 2008-2009, where she served on the Presidential Transition Support Team (PTST) while assigned to the U.S. General Services Administration. The White House Fellows Foundation and Association awarded Nicole the 2019 IMPACT Award for demonstrating both remarkable achievement and transformational contributions in her field, as well as a sustained commitment to the White House Fellows program. Nicole also served two high-level staff assignments at the Pentagon – one in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD P&R) as well as the Secretary of the Air Force Office of International Affairs (SAF/IA). She also served as the Executive Director of the White House's national 'Joining Forces' initiative where she directly advised former First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden on all topics relating to service members, veterans, and military families to include employment, education, mental health, veterans' homelessness and more.

Nicole's operational F-15E assignments include two tours of duty at RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom as well as one operational assignment to Seymour Johnson AFB, NC. She has also served alongside the United States Army 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Red Cloud, Republic of Korea, as an Air Liaison Officer. During her second assignment to Seymour Johnson AFB, NC, she had the honor of commanding the 333rd Fighter Squadron, leading an elite

cadre of F-15E Instructors in the training of the next generation of combat aviators. Further, she was responsible for resources totaling over $1.1B and the execution of a $119M annual flying hour program.

Nicole earned a Master of Arts, with honors, in National Security Policy from American Military University and a second Master of Arts, with highest distinction, in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College. While there, she earned the Admiral Stephen B. Luce Award as the class honor graduate, the first Air Force officer in the history of the Naval War College to do so. Nicole has received several prestigious honors in recognition of her significant contributions to various endeavors, including the 2023 Award of Inspiration from The Ninety-Nines, Inc.®, an international organization of women pilots who are dedicated to encouraging and inspiring people to chase their dreams, whether in aviation directly or in other arenas.

Colonel Nicole Malachowski, USAF (Ret.) was born in Santa Maria, CA and graduated high school in Las Vegas, NV. She and her husband Paul have twin children; son Garrick and daughter Norah. Paul is a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel and former F-15E Evaluator Weapons Systems Officer.