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FORT WORTH, TX ---- In 1974 when a young woman, only 18, ventured to San Antonio, Texas for Basic Training at Lackland Air Force Base, it was her first taste of real freedom. A recent high school graduate who had lived her life in West Virginia, young Vickie Comer had not traveled from her home state before. But this trip would be the first step in world travel, and Texas would remain in her heart.

Named this month as one of Texas' Great Women by the Fort Worth Business Press, Vickie C. Mauldin has not only made Texas her home, but has contributed to its betterment in countless ways. Mauldin is Executive Director of First Command Educational Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works toward financial literacy across the country from its headquarters in Fort Worth.

When young Comer graduated from Montgomery High in Powell, WV, she was Valedictorian of her class, and received eight offers for scholarships to college. But that just wasn't her plan. "Even though nice girls just didn't join the armed services," she now reminisces, "I wanted to travel, to try new things, and that certainly didn't deter me."

Indeed, Mauldin wasn't worried about the challenge. After enlisting in the Air Force, she was assigned to the Women's Air Force Squadron, where she spent two years segregated with other women in conventional female training roles such as posture and grooming classes. But she moved on as quickly as possible, to be in the first class of women allowed into Air Force avionics. After that, every position Mauldin held in the avionics field was the first held by a woman.

In 1997, Mauldin moved into executive roles. She was appointed the first woman commandant of the Air Force European Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Academy, which taught leadership and management skills to mid level ranking AF personnel. She

also was the first female Air Force NCO to ever hold two major command positions. One command entailed providing humanitarian relief aid in Bosnia and Albania. In 2003, Mauldin was the first woman to become a finalist for the highest NCO position in the Air Force, that of Chief Master Sergeant.

Mauldin's career highlights include instructor awards, honor graduate from the 27th Fighter Wing Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Course, and distinguished graduate from both the Air Training Command NCO Academy and the Senior NCO Academy. She was also selected as the 8th Fighter Wing Maintenance Professional of the Year for 1992, Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea. In her two previous assignments, Mauldin was the command chief master sergeant for Headquarters Third Air Force and U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

Meanwhile, she graduated summa cum laude from Park University with her Bachelor of Science Degree in Management/Human Resources, graduating Summa Cum Laude, and was an honor graduate in every ASF training course she took. She is currently working on her Master of Business Degree with Regis University, Denver.

Mauldin retired from the Air Force in October 2004 as a Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC), with headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, where she advised the command on the welfare, effective utilization, education, and progress of the command's nearly 20,000 enlisted airmen.

In March 2005 Mauldin joined First Command Financial Planning as NCO Market Integration Manager. That same year she became Deputy Director of FCED and was named to her current position as Executive Director on January 1, 2006.

Mauldin has been instrumental in guiding FCEF to an array of achievements. Under her leadership the foundation created a curriculum to train high school juniors and seniors about financial literacy. The curriculum was approved by the Texas State Board of Education, and the foundation also received certification to train educators on the curriculum through the Texas Educational Agency. The curriculum has been shared with educators in other states as their

legislators mandate the study of financial literacy, and it was the genesis of a grass roots effort in Washington to press legislators to mandate the same type of program as that in Texas.

“I have a passion for financial literacy,” Mauldin stated. “Having advised and mentored so many young men and women in my military career, I realized that financial hazards were a very difficult problem for our Armed Services. As retired AF I have remained just as determined to help as many people, military and civilian, as possible to grow toward good money management habits.

“FCEF has touched more than 40,000 men, women and children with its financial literacy classes just since 2006. It is our vision to help people learn wealth-building strategies through the wise use of credit and good savings. The current consumer credit debt is over \$4 Trillion and a good percentage of that will not be paid back. That’s not good for individuals, for families or for our nation’s economy. With training, however, more people will learn the responsibility of credit as a money management tool,” Mauldin said.