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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flight of the Lightning Bolt

FOOTHILL RANCH, Calif. (July 22, 2016) – For over 100 years, the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah have attracted riders and drivers in search of world land speed records in a variety of classes. Until the 1970s most motorcycle records had been set by American, British and European powered machines – and then Don Vesco arrived from El Cajon, California. Over several years, the self-taught engineer and racer raised the record again and again with Japanese power, finally achieving 318.598 mph on a twin Kawasaki KZ1000-powered streamliner named Lightning Bolt.

Measuring 21 feet long and weighing 1,100 pounds with Vesco aboard, the turbocharged KZ1000 engines of this aerodynamically streamlined machine were enveloped in a steel chassis, which was outfitted with special high-speed Goodyear racing tires. Displacing 1,016cc and producing 300 horsepower apiece, the engines were nearly stock except for their custom-made turbocharger systems. The front and rear engines were connected by a toothed belt and drove Lightning Bolt through the rear engine's gearbox. The liner was slowed by twin parachutes from near top speed to about 150 mph, after which a rear disc brake took over. In case of mishap, there was also a steel roll-cage built from 1 ½-inch chrome-moly tubing.

On the afternoon of August 28, 1978, Vesco set out to make the back-to-back runs required to claim a new record. With the twin KZ1000 engines running 27 pounds of turbo boost, Vesco completed the first run at 318.330 mph, after which he and his team turned Lightning Bolt around, refueled and repacked the parachutes for the necessary return run. With the winds still favorably calm, Vesco and Lightning Bolt sped across four miles of salt before clicking into top gear and hustling through the measured mile at 318.952 mph to claim the new FIM world record. Always hungry for more speed, in September Vesco made an official one-way run at 333.117 mph. But there were still more surprises in store. He disconnected the front KZ1000 engine and put stuntwoman Marcia Holley into Lightning Bolt, where she broke the record for a single-engine, two-wheel vehicle, averaging 229.361 mph over two runs to become the “fastest woman on two wheels.”

Fastest Woman on Two Wheels

Marcia Holley Exceeds Magic Speed Barrier



During the week long speed contest held at Bonneville Dry Lake, Utah, expert motorcyclist Marcia Holley became the first woman to break the 200 mph barrier on two wheels. By setting a two-way average speed of 229.361 mph, Marcia earned a seat

in Bonneville's prestigious 200 Miles Per Hour Club.

After a record shattering two way run of 318.598 mph, veteran speedster, Don Vesco turned the controls of his liner over to Marcia. With

one of the two KZ1000 engines disconnected, Marcia set out on her first streamliner ride.

Marcia's run of 229.361 mph betters the previous AMA single engine streamliner record by 45.404 mph.

Article from November 1978 Issue *Good Times* magazine

Today Lightning Bolt is being restored by Don's brother Rick Vesco, elegant in its retirement and a reminder of the tremendous performance bandwidth of the original engine design of the Z1 motorcycle. From streetbikes to AMA Superbikes, and from police bikes to custom cruisers, drag racers, touring rigs and even world land speed record runs, the Z1 and the KZ900 and KZ1000 models that followed were simply out of this world for Kawasaki. And world-championship power for terrestrial heroes like Don Vesco.

ABOUT KAWASAKI

Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd. (KHI) started full-scale production of motorcycles over a half century ago. The first Kawasaki motorcycle engine was designed based on technical know-how garnered from the development and production of aircraft engines, and Kawasaki's entry into the motorcycle industry was driven by the company's constant effort to develop new technologies. Numerous new Kawasaki models introduced over the years have helped shape the market, and in the process have created enduring legends based on their unique engineering, power, design and riding pleasure. In the future, Kawasaki's commitment to maintaining and furthering these strengths will surely give birth to new legends.

Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A. (KMC) markets and distributes Kawasaki motorcycles, ATVs, side x sides, and Jet Ski® watercraft through a network of approximately 1,100 independent retailers, with close to an additional 7,700 retailers specializing in general purpose engines. KMC and its affiliates employ nearly 3,100 people in the United States, with approximately 300 of them located at KMC's Foothill Ranch, California headquarters.

Kawasaki's tagline, "Let the good times roll.®", is recognized worldwide. The Kawasaki brand is synonymous with powerful, stylish and category-leading vehicles. Information about Kawasaki's complete line of powersports products and Kawasaki affiliates can be found on the Internet at www.kawasaki.com.