

July/August 2026



Ninety-Nines

Inspiring Women Pilots Since 1929

**NELL
“MICKEY”
STEVENSON
BRIGHT**
THE LAST
LIVING WASP

plus

TRIBUTE TO JUDY PHELPS
FIRST WINGS AWARD WINNERS
SHAHARA MURPHY'S JOURNEY

Ninety-Nines Magazine

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The Ninety-Nines® International Organization of Women Pilots® promotes advancement of aviation through education, scholarships, and mutual support while honoring our unique history and sharing our passion for flight.

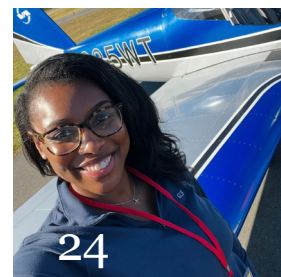
Let's Get Social



ON THE COVER

A timeless conversation with the final WASP, whose courage opened the skies for every woman who flies.

4	Calendar
5	President's Message
6	Executive Director's Message
7	Holding Short
9	Reports
12	Touch & Go Careers
13	The Mental Runway
14	Tribute to Judy Phelps A Life That Lifted Others
16	Charter Members
18	2026 Spring First Wings Awards
21	Nell "Mickey" Stevenson Bright The Last Living WASP <i>By Samantha Joy Inguanzo, Florida Goldcoast Chapter</i>
24	Shahara Murphy's Journey The Importance of Mentoring <i>By Tiana Golding, Connecticut Chapter</i>
26	Essays
30	Ask the AME
31	Milestones
32	Book Reviews
33	Grass Roots
38	Life Members Friends of The 99s New Horizons



Thank You to Our Sponsors



2026

JUL

- 8-12 **Ninety-Nines International Conference**
San Diego, California
ninety-nines.org
- 15 **Deadline for submitting Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) Application for Mentoring Autumn Session**
ninety-nines.org/resources.htm

- 20-26 **EAA AirVenture Oshkosh**
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
eaa.org/airventure

AUG

- 11-13 **Palms to Pines Air Race**
palmstopinesairrace.com/
- 27-30 **Northwest Section Fall Meeting**
Teton Valley, Idaho
✦ Beth Chapple,
bethchapple@gmail.com

SEP

- 12 **International Forest of Friendship 50th Anniversary**
"World Friendship through Flight"
Induction Ceremony
Atchison, Kansas
ifof.org
- 23-24 **4th Female Instructor Pilots Meeting (FIPM)**
Reykjavik & Húsafell, Iceland
elevatetheline.com/events

SEP (cont.)

- 24-27 **Southwest Section Fall Meeting**
Las Vegas, Nevada
sws99s.org/events/fall-section/
- 24-27 **Southeast Section Fall Meeting**
Nashville, Tennessee
nashville99smeeting@gmail.com

OCT

- 1 **Deadline for Fall First Wings Awards Application**
ninety-nines.org/amelia-earhart-scholarships-awards.htm

- 2-3 **Mid-Atlantic Section Fall Meeting**
✦ Maria Esparraguera
mdegirt@comcast.net

- 2-4 **North Central Section Fall Meeting**
Indianapolis, Indiana
Indiana Chapter
✦ Erin Hammer,
erin@hammergrip.tv

- 23-24 **South Central Section Fall Meeting**
Tyler, Texas
Texas Dogwood Chapter

- 31 **Little Flyer's Trick or Treat**
Fayette County Airport,
Somerville, Tennessee
Memphis Chapter

NOV

- 6-7 **International Board of Directors Meeting**
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
HQ@ninety-nines.org

2027

JAN

- 15 **Deadline for submitting Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative (PPLI) Application for Mentoring Spring Session**
ninety-nines.org/resources.htm

MAR

- 5-6 **International Board of Directors Spring Meeting**
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
HQ@ninety-nines.org APR

- 23-25 **Southeast Section Spring Meeting**
Jonesborough, Tennessee
✦ Mary Woody
mmh.woody@gmail.com

SEP

- 8-12 **Ninety-Nines International Conference**
Sydney, Australia

MAGAZINE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

are one month prior to issue date.
SEP/OCT issue deadline: Aug 1.

*Check the online calendar
for the latest information.*
ninety-nines.org/calendar.htm



IN SEARCH OF SERIOUS SLEUTHS

Help Us Continue Our Charter Member Project

The 99s Publications Committee has undertaken the very important project of featuring The 99s' charter members in the *Ninety-Nines* magazine. It is our intention to shine a light on all 99 of them in the issues leading up to The 99s' 100th anniversary. This project entails significant research, since many charter members married several times – so they'll have several name changes – and often little is written about their aviation accomplishments. Once the research is complete, a 400-500-word write-up must be submitted to the Publications Committee, along with a high-resolution photo of the charter member. While this is a great way for a 99 member to contribute to The 99s, others outside the organization can contribute to the project and will be given credit for their assistance.

If you have a love of history and research and are looking for a way to contribute to The 99s right now, Contact Lori at 99spubschair@gmail.com and join the team.



Robin Hadfield

President

The Ninety-Nines, Inc.

president@ninety-nines.org

President Hadfield's Final Message

As I write my final President's Message for The Ninety-Nines magazine, I do so with a full heart. Serving as your International President for the past four years – two terms – has been one of the greatest honors of my aviation journey.

The Ninety-Nines is a long-established and remarkable organization of women pilots, built on friendship, mutual support, education, service, and a shared love of flight. To have had the opportunity to help lead this organization has been both humbling and deeply rewarding.

Over these past four years, I've had the privilege of meeting so many incredible members from around the world. I've visited with chapters, sections, committees, trustees, scholarship recipients, volunteers, new pilots, experienced aviators, and longtime members whose dedication continues to inspire me. Everywhere I've gone, I've seen the same spirit that has carried The Ninety-Nines forward since 1929: women supporting women in aviation.

I've also had the privilege of working with two wonderful International Boards of Directors, as well as our Headquarters staff, committee chairs, trustees, and countless volunteers. Their commitment, professionalism, and love for this organization have made an enormous difference. Leadership in The Ninety-Nines is never the work of one person. It is the result of many hands, many voices, and many hearts working together for the good of our members.

During the past four years, we've welcomed more than 1,000 new members into The Ninety-Nines. Growth is exciting, but it also reminds us of our responsibility. Welcoming a new member is only the beginning. Helping her feel that she belongs, that she is seen, and that she has a place in this organization is what truly matters.

We have also taken important steps to strengthen the support available to our members and leaders. The hiring of a full-time Executive Director has been a significant milestone for The Ninety-Nines, helping us move forward with stronger operational leadership and a greater focus on long-term planning. We've also added support through accounting and membership coordination, ensuring that our members, chapters, sections, and leaders have people they can turn to for questions, guidance, and assistance.

Another initiative that has been especially meaningful to me is the creation of the monthly Chapter Leadership Roundtable. These gatherings have brought chapter executive teams together to learn from one another, share ideas, mentor each other, and work through challenges. From fundraising and outreach programs to membership engagement and leadership transitions, these conversations have shown the power of connection. No chapter needs to feel that it is working alone. Across The Ninety-Nines, there is a wealth of experience, creativity, and encouragement ready to be shared.

As we continue to grow, one of our greatest opportunities is to strengthen the sense of belonging and involvement among all members. Every member has a story. Every chapter has achievements to celebrate. Every section has ideas that may inspire others. I encourage chapters to share member milestones, achievements, events, scholarship successes, first solos, new ratings, community outreach, and special projects – not only within your own chapter, but also with the wider Ninety-Nines community.

Please cross-post and share these moments with our International Facebook group and Instagram page. We want to celebrate with you. When one member earns a certificate, receives an award, completes a first flight, mentors a student pilot, organizes an event, or gives back to her aviation community, that success belongs to all of us. Sharing these stories helps members feel connected, reminds new members they are part of something larger, and shows the world the strength and spirit of The Ninety-Nines.

I would also like to extend my sincere congratulations to the newly-elected International Board of Directors, the trustees elected to serve our four trusts, and the members elected to the Nominating Committee. Thank you for stepping forward to serve. The future of The Ninety-Nines depends on members who are willing to give their time, energy, and leadership to this organization. I know you will carry forward the mission of The Ninety-Nines with care, vision, and dedication.

Continued on page 6 >

The President's Message (Cont...)

To those who have been serving and are now completing their terms, thank you. Your work, often done quietly and behind the scenes, has strengthened this organization. Leadership in The Ninety-Nines requires time, patience, and commitment, and your service is deeply appreciated.

As my term as International President comes to a close, I find myself reflecting not only on what we have accomplished, but also on what makes The Ninety-Nines so special. It is not simply our history, although our history is extraordinary. It is not only our scholarships, our programs, our museums, our conferences, or our chapters, although each of these is important. What makes The Ninety-Nines truly special is our members.

You are the heart of this organization.

You are the mentors who answer late-night questions from student pilots. You are the chapter officers who organize meetings, fly-outs, fundraisers, and outreach events. You are the scholarship reviewers, museum volunteers, committee members, section leaders, conference planners, and quiet encouragers. You are the women who celebrate each other's successes and help each other through challenges. You are the reason The Ninety-Nines continues to grow, adapt, and remain relevant nearly a century after our founding.

Although this is my final President's Message, you are not rid of me yet. I will continue to serve on the International Board for the next two years as Immediate Past President, and I look forward to supporting the incoming leadership and continuing to serve this organization we all love.

I hope to see many of you at our International Conference in San Diego, July 8-12, 2026. Conferences are always a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old friends, make new ones, celebrate accomplishments, learn together, and renew our shared commitment to The Ninety-Nines.

Thank you for your trust, your support, your encouragement, and your friendship over these past four years. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your International President. It has been an honor I will always treasure.

With gratitude and blue skies,

Robin Hadfield

President, The Ninety-Nines, Inc.

Executive Director Message



Jill van Egmond

*Executive Director
The Ninety-Nines, Inc.*

Headquarters and Operations

Headquarters operations continue to center on providing thoughtful, consistent support to members through strong daily management, careful stewardship of our facilities, and strategic investments that enhance the overall member experience. While much of this work happens behind the scenes, it plays an essential role in ensuring that members feel supported, connected, and well served.

In recent months, several facility improvements have been completed to maintain and strengthen our physical space. These include repairs to building exterior and parking lot lighting, plumbing updates, wall repairs within the Museum of Women Pilots, and the installation of a high-density filing system designed to improve records management, increase storage capacity, and enhance overall operational efficiency. Restoration of the compass rose, one of Headquarters' most recognizable and meaningful features, is also underway, helping to preserve both the character and history of the property. Collectively, these efforts support a safe, well-functioning environment while strengthening the organization's ability to manage its resources effectively.

At the same time, we are making important investments in the systems that support how we serve our members. Implementation of NEON CRM, a cloud-based database system, is well underway and will significantly strengthen our ability to manage membership records, communications, events, and donor engagement. This transition is designed to improve efficiency, enhance data accuracy, and reduce administrative workload, allowing staff to focus more fully on member-facing priorities. To complement these efforts, we have engaged Diverse CTI, a cybersecurity firm, to help ensure that our systems meet current security standards and that member and organizational information remains well protected.

Financial stewardship remains a central priority and is closely aligned with advancing the organization's mission. We continue to approach budgeting with care, identifying opportunities to manage expenses responsibly while maintaining the effectiveness and quality of our programs and operations. In parallel, development of a fundraising plan for the 2026–2027 fiscal year is underway, with a focus on strengthening long-term sustainability and ensuring continued support for the programs and services members value most.

We are also expanding efforts to deepen community engagement and elevate awareness of The Ninety-Nines. Planning is currently underway for a Plane Pull fundraising event, offering a unique opportunity to engage the public while supporting the organization's mission. In addition, we continue to support the development of the Bessie Coleman Observation Garden through the Oklahoma City MAPS 4 initiative, an exciting project that honors a pioneering aviator while creating a lasting public space for education and inspiration. These initiatives reflect a broader commitment to building meaningful partnerships and extending our reach within the community.

Equally important are the ongoing conversations with members, section governors, and chapter chairs. These discussions provide valuable perspective and insight, helping us better understand evolving needs and ensuring that planning, communication, and organizational priorities remain grounded in the member experience.

It is a privilege to serve as Executive Director and to work alongside a dedicated International Board of Directors, staff, and members who are deeply committed to the mission. Together, we are building on a strong foundation, and I look forward to the continued progress and opportunities that lie ahead.

Holding Short

Wright Brothers Master Pilot Awardees

Cecelia Stratford, March 2026,
Ventura County Chapter

Lucy Young, February 2026,
Eastern New England Chapter

Ron Cahill, 49 1/2 of Bernadette Cahill,
February 2026, *Mississippi Chapter*

The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award is named in honor of Orville and Wilbur Wright, who were two American aviation pioneers credited with inventing, building, and flying the world's first successful motor-operated airplane. The Wright Flyer flew on December 17, 1903, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award is the most prestigious award the FAA issues to pilots. This award is to recognize individuals who have exhibited exemplary aviation expertise, distinguished professionalism, and steadfast commitment for at least 50 years of piloting experience.

There are certain eligibility requirements. One is the effective start date for the 50 years is the date of the nominee's first solo flight or military equivalent. An applicant does not have to be currently flying to apply. Applications are available on the FAA website under Pilots – Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award – FFASTeam.

If you or your 49 1/2 would like to be included, please email your name, month/year received, and chapter name to PatOhlsson@fly-in.com (Reference: 99 WBMPA)

REPORTING POINTS

Pikes Peak Chapter

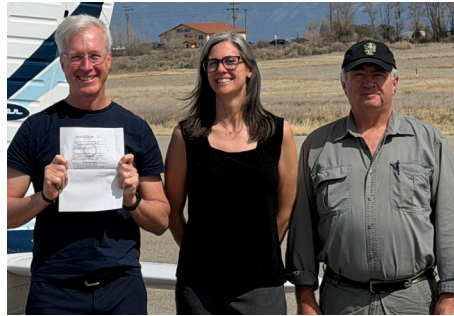
– Sarah Nguyen, *Publicity Chair*,
Pikes Peak Chapter



Stacy Pritts with her DPE Kevin Dunshee upon passing her CFI check ride.

Stacy Pritts, Scholarship Chair of the Pikes Peak Chapter, passed her CFI check

ride on May 8. Upon her return, she was immediately offered a position at the Rocky Mountain Flight Training Center.



Melissa Kurrle with Tim Haynie and DPE for Tim's check ride, Jim Fleming.

Melissa Kurrle, Secretary of the Pikes Peak Chapter, observed her first commercial student pass his check ride on March 24. Then on April 18, she endorsed and witnessed her first student's solo in his endeavor to become a private pilot.

Michigan Chapter Members

– Barb Vukits, *Michigan Chapter*



Rebecca Durbin was the featured guest speaker, along with another fellow Marine helicopter pilot, at a career day at Jacksonville Commons Middle School in North Carolina. Rebecca's Marine Aircraft Group 26 (MAG-26) unit adopted the school, and she has assisted with several other events in the past. Rebecca shared that, "the kids loved putting the gear on, and the girls were very excited to see women pilots."



Reba Milow left for her military training in early May.

Casey Raymond Graduates

– Lori Plourd, *Katahdin Wings Chapter*



Katahdin Wings Chapter is proud to announce Chapter Chair **Casey Raymond** has completed the Bachelor of Science in Aviation program and the A&P mechanics program at the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA). She graduated on May 9, 2026. During the ceremony, she was presented with the Kathleen Dexter Distinguished Student Award, a prestigious honor presented by UMA to a graduating student who demonstrates excellence in academic achievement, extracurricular leadership, and community service. Named for a former UMA Dean of Students, it highlights exemplary student contributions. Casey recently opened a flight school, Wildshore Aviation, at Belfast Municipal Airport (KBST), in Belfast, Maine.

A Spin Winner

– Lois Horne, *Chair*, *Memphis Chapter*



Alisa Permaul received a Spin Endorsement voucher from Pete Reddan with Vapor Global Aviation at a Memphis 99s Soup & Slice event.

Holding Short

All-Ohio Chapter Members

– Margaret Hazlett,
Secretary, All-Ohio Chapter



Two All-Ohio Chapter members have passed the written test portion of training: **Gabby Tan** for Instrument, and First Wings Award recipient **Jodie-Lee Hostetler** for Private Pilot.

Finger Lakes Chapter Member Chosen to Participate in Author's Corner at EAA Airventure



Author and illustrator of *I See An Airplane Up In The Sky*, **Sheila M. Young** has been selected to participate in Experimental Aircraft Association's Author's Corner in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, July 20-26, 2026. The event allows readers and aviation enthusiasts to participate in meet-and-greets with

authors, share stories and leave with personalized and signed copies of their favorite aviation books.

Airventure also has a special component and building called Womenventure where Ms. Young will be for an animated reading of her book and book signing on Thursday, July 23. She'll be at the Wearhouse on Monday, July 20 and Wednesday, July 22, for meet-and-greets and book signings.

Sheila is very excited about having the opportunity to meet and inspire aviation enthusiasts of all ages (girls and guys) to go chase their BIG DREAMS to FLY!! If you're at Oshkosh, please stop by and say hello and grab some personalized copies of her book to share with the current or future pilots in your life. Visit Sheila's website at SheilaMYoung.com or follow her on Instagram at [Sheila.M.Young](https://www.instagram.com/Sheila.M.Young).

Hilda Ray Honored in Her Hometown



Elena Ray, granddaughter of Alabama Chapter member **Hilda Ray**, has reached out to let us know Hilda has been honored by a local museum in her hometown of Jasper, Alabama, where she still resides today. Elena said, "The 99s changed my

grandmother's entire life...and for the good. Throughout her time with The 99s, she has served in many leadership roles, including Vice Governor and Treasurer of the Southeast Section, serving on the Endowment Fund committee, and holding many positions on the Alabama Chapter board. Her exhibit is currently featured at the Bankhead House & Heritage Center in recognition of her extraordinary accomplishments and lifelong contributions to aviation.

"Hilda Ray was the very first female pilot in Walker County, Alabama, to obtain her pilot's certificate. In fact, she earned her Private, Commercial, and Instrument ratings all within the same year. In honor of her accomplishments and her leadership in the community, she was presented with an official proclamation from the State of Alabama and has had three streets in Jasper named in her honor.

"She has remained a passionate supporter and advocate of The 99s throughout the years, and I simply wanted to share this wonderful news with an organization that has meant so much to her life and legacy."



Southeast Section Museum Challenge!

– Marilyn Shafer, Governor, Southeast Section

At our Spring Section Meeting in Sarasota, Florida, the membership voted to help the museums in this, their time of need. The Southeast Section has reconfigured its budget to aid the museums needing support.

We are donating \$2,000 to each museum:

- Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum www.ameliaearhartmuseum.org
- Museum of Women Pilots www.museumofwomenpilots.org

Both of these entities are supported and run by The 99s and **WE INVITE YOU to meet or exceed our donation!**

Let's step up and keep our heritage viable for the future.

Reports

2026 INTERNATIONAL ELECTION FINAL RESULTS

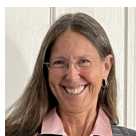
Board, Nominating Committee Members, and Trustees

This International election included four Officer positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer), two Director positions, three members of the Nominating Committee, two trustees for the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum (AEBM), two trustees for the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund (AEMS), one trustee for the Endowment Fund, and two trustees for The 99s Museum of Women Pilots (MWP).

The International election was held from March 15, 2026, to May 1, 2026. ElectionBuddy was used as our service provider, and they managed all ballots whether electronic or paper.

There were 7,600 eligible voters; 1,953 ballots were returned, including 1,875 electronic and 78 paper ballots, or 25.7% of the total ballots distributed. Two printed ballots reported as non-delivered were re-issued via email using their original access code(s) to secure against any member voting twice.

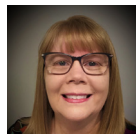
ELECTED WERE THE FOLLOWING:



President
Terry Carbonell
*Paradise Coast Chapter,
Southeast Section*



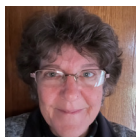
Vice-President
Janet Patton
*Ambassador Chapter,
South Central Section*



Secretary
Aileen Coverdell
*Mid-Columbia Chapter,
Northwest Section*



Treasurer
Maria Lamia
*Blue Ridge Chapter,
Southeast Section*



Director
Teresa Camp
*Oklahoma Chapter,
South Central Section*



Director
Heather Grimes
*Florida Goldcoast Chapter,
Southeast Section*

THANK YOU to all the candidates who ran for office and to all the eligible voters who cast a ballot.

Over the coming months, the Election Procedures Committee will conduct demographic analysis of the voting results to try and find ways to encourage more members to participate in the voting process and to reduce the use of printed ballots.

Please make sure your member information including email address and cell phone number (for text notifications) are updated and correct in The 99s database if you choose to vote electronically, or your mailing address if you wish to receive a paper ballot. Online voting is secure, efficient, and the most cost-effective way to hold the election.

Election Procedures Committee: Kathy Fox, Chair, Deb Henneberry, Gretchen Jahn

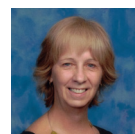
MEMBERS OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE:



Anita Mixon
*Treasure Coast Chapter,
Southeast Section*



Kathy Lester-Ross
*Wisconsin Chapter,
North Central Section*



Judi Oswald
*Eastern New England Chapter,
New England Section*

TRUSTEES:



AEBM
Karin Rodland
*Columbia Cascade Chapter,
Northwest Section*



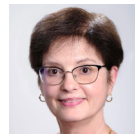
AEBM
Sherry LeMaster
*Maui Chapter,
Southwest Section*



AEMS
Susan Passmore
*Old Dominion Chapter,
Mid-Atlantic Section*



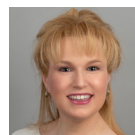
AEMS
Madeleine "Emmy" Dillon
*San Diego Chapter,
Southwest Section*



Endowment Fund
Rosanne Isom
*New Jersey Chapter,
New York-New Jersey Section*



MWP
Leslie Prellwitz
*Chicago Area Chapter,
North Central Section*



MWP
Alexandra Kindrat
*Eastern Ontario Chapter,
East Canada Section*



PRESERVING HISTORY: THE DONATION AND CATALOGING PROCESS AT THE MUSEUM OF WOMEN PILOTS

– Brandy Ball, Director, *Museum of Women Pilots*

There have been many calls and emails about the donation process to the museum, so let's talk about it!

It is my pleasure to introduce myself. My name is Brandy Ball, and I have served as Museum Director since April 1, 2024. I hold both a bachelor's and a master's degree in history and museum studies, and prior to assuming my current role, I spent two years as a museum technician at the University of Central Oklahoma Museum and simultaneously served as an educator at Carl Albert High School.

The journey of an artifact into the permanent collection of the Museum of Women Pilots begins with a careful vetting process. Each prospective donation is evaluated against the Museum's mission statement to ensure alignment, and staff must also confirm that the item does not duplicate an existing holding – a necessary step given the archives and collection's limited space.

Prospective donors are encouraged to submit photographs of their artifact or artifacts via email to 99mwp1929@gmail.com, rather than calling. This approach allows staff to maintain a thorough electronic record from the very first point of contact. Items that pass the initial review are then subject to a formal requirement: the completion of a Deed of Gift. This legally binding document transfers ownership of the item to the museum and serves as the foundation for everything that follows; no cataloging begins until it is received.

From there, the real work begins. Processing a collection is a meticulous and time-intensive undertaking. Each accepted item must be documented across multiple categories, including its condition, physical composition, and classification. Most notably, every single object – regardless of size or significance – is assigned a unique Object ID number that belongs to it and it alone. A helmet once worn by Amelia Earhart, for instance, carries the number 2006.000.001; no other item in the Museum shares that designation.

These identifiers are far more than administrative formality. They are the backbone of the collection's retrieval system. When a 99s member requests a specific photograph – say, 2008.001.008 – staff can locate it with precision, no matter how vast the collection grows.

The collection management process of the Museum of Women Pilots reflects a deep commitment to preservation and accessibility. From the initial email submission to the assignment of a unique Object ID, every step is designed with intention, ensuring that each artifact is not only protected but retrievable for generations to come. In honoring the women who shaped aviation history, the museum treats every donated item, no matter how small, as an irreplaceable piece of a larger story worth telling.



COLLEGIATE WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENT AWARD APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR 2026!

– Laura Laster, *Member At Large*

It is extremely satisfying to see a project from inception to completion. That is the privilege several members experienced with the successful first cycle of the Collegiate Women's Achievement Award (CWAA). The first award cycle culminated with awarding the flight training funds to Jun Okiawa, our first winner! She was selected from a small pool of applicants who met the award criteria and then were evaluated by an outside panel of judges.

Here is where you come in. We need your help in spreading the news about the new opportunity for eligible members for the 2026 award applications!

Important points about the award are listed here:

- The award recognizes an outstanding collegiate member who has demonstrated academic excellence, professionalism, leadership, and volunteerism.
- In order to apply, a collegiate member must have been a Ninety-Nine for at least three months and of sophomore or higher-class rank, enrolled at a United States accredited college or university, and actively pursuing a degree in the aviation field.
- Applicants must also be working toward a Private Pilot Certificate or higher and have at least a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Additional application requirements are listed on the award application. This year's application is available here: www.bit.ly/CWAA26-27
- The CWAA committee selects three external judges who make the final award determination.
- One award of \$3,500 is planned for the annual award. Funds will be paid directly to the college/university or flight school affiliated with the winner's college/university.
- Applications will be accepted beginning in July. All applications must be received by October 1. Each application must have two professional references received by October 20. The final award announcement will be on approximately January 1 each year.

How can you help? Help us spread the word! Tell those you know who might be able to apply or those at your local college with an aviation program.

Consider donating financially to support the award's continued funding, whether yourself or someone from your chapter/section. Notify your chapter!

If you are interested in helping with ongoing committee work, please reach out to a committee member: Marilyn Shafer and Laura Laster would be happy to connect with you and provide additional information. Both are listed in the member directory.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the CWAA and its vision for the future of aviation!

SHANNON OSBORNE: LEADING THE AEBM BY EXAMPLE

– Scott Weinmann, Interim Director,
Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum



Some people discover aviation. Greater New York Chapter member **Shannon Osborne** was born into it. Her father flew for United Airlines, and the family home was not just near an airport – it was an airport. Shannon grew up at Crest Airpark in Kent, Washington, a private fly-in community where neighbors taxied to their front doors and the sound of engines was simply the sound of home.

Her first job? Pumping fuel on the ramp. Before she was old enough to solo, she was already part of the fabric of flight, learning not from textbooks but from the living, breathing world of general aviation that surrounded her every single day.

At fifteen, she began flight training. The cockpit felt natural. But like so many aspiring aviators, she ran headlong into the two great adversaries of early flying careers: time and money. Training was paused, life moved on, and the logbook sat closed for decades.

Then her daughter graduated from college. Something clicked. Shannon was in her forties, and she decided, with resolve, that it was time to fly again.

She earned her Private Pilot Certificate and set her sights on an Instrument Rating – work that was well underway until COVID-19 grounded so much of the world in 2020. For her, the journey has never been about the destination certificate on the wall. It's about the sky itself.

Her aircraft of choice is the Cessna: reliable, honest, and forgiving in the best possible ways. Her favorite kind of flying is the quintessential general aviation tradition: the \$100 Hamburger. Any route, any direction, as long as it ends with good company at a small airport diner somewhere.

Returning to flying in your 40s, as a woman, with a career and a family, is not a small thing. There are the logistical challenges: scheduling, expense, currency requirements. And then there are the subtler ones: walking into an FBO where everyone seems to know each other, feeling like a newcomer in a world you've always loved.

That's where The 99s changed everything.

During her training, Shannon encountered 99s members who were supportive in the way only fellow pilots can be, not just with encouragement, but with practical wisdom. They knew the bumps in the road because they had hit them, too. They shared what worked. They helped her find her footing.

In 2004, Shannon joined the organization formally. More than two decades later, she describes the relationship with the same warmth and precision she'd use to describe a perfectly executed crosswind landing.

She speaks of learning from everyone she flies with, of taking what works for her and incorporating it into her own flying life. That philosophy – humble, curious, always growing – is at the heart of what The 99s represent.

Shannon's first visit to Atchison, Kansas, came in 2014. She arrived, as many 99s do, with curiosity and reverence. She left with something more: a sense of belonging to a place and a story far larger than herself.

There, on the front path of the museum, sits a brick honoring the bond between Shannon and her father, a small, permanent marker etched with the names Harry and Shannon Osborne, 2014, Dad and

Daughter. Father and child, pilot and pilot, side by side in stone at the birthplace of the woman who changed everything for women who fly.

The Forest of Friendship, that remarkable site in Atchison that honors aviation's legends, inducted both Shannon and her father. The historic Amelia Earhart Airport, the grandeur of the present-day facility, the Victorian house on the bluff above the Missouri River – all of it captured her completely.

When the opportunity arose to join the Board of the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum, she didn't hesitate. She had fallen in love with Atchison and its story. Being a Trustee was a way to put that love to work.

Shannon became Treasurer of the AEBM Board in July 2025. And then she looked at the books.

What she saw made the decision simple. The museum needed resources. Not in an abstract, someday-we-should-fundraise way. In a real, immediate, this-matters-now way. And Shannon Osborne is not someone who asks others to do what she hasn't done herself.

She donated \$10,000 to the AEBM Endowment Fund.

The inspiration for directing her gift to the endowment came from a woman named Mary Wunder, whom Shannon first met when Mary was fundraising for The 99s Endowment Fund. Mary's example, her conviction, her generosity, her belief that some things are worth sustaining beyond any individual tenure, planted a seed. Shannon, now a Trustee herself, decided to do the same for the AEBM.

An endowment gift is not like writing a check for a new exhibit or a repair project. It is a statement about the future. It says: I believe this institution will exist long after I am here to see it, and I want my investment compounding on behalf of people who haven't been born yet.

Shannon puts it simply, and beautifully, "We all have just so much time on this earth. It would be wonderful to be able to help leave something behind."

Shannon Osborne is not a wealthy heiress or a corporate aviation executive. She is a 99s member who grew up pumping gas at a private airpark, who took decades to find her way back to the cockpit, and who has built her flying life with exactly the patience and resourcefulness that general aviation demands.

Her gift was meaningful precisely because it required something of her. That is the point.

The Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum is not just a building in Kansas. It is the physical home of the woman who co-founded our organization. Amelia Earhart did not become who she was in spite of the barriers placed before her – she became who she was because she refused to accept them, and then she reached back and invited every other woman in aviation along for the journey.

That home on the bluff in Atchison deserves to stand. It deserves a staff that can do its work. It deserves an endowment that removes financial anxiety from the equation so that the people running the museum can focus entirely on the mission.

Shannon is asking her fellow 99s to consider what they can give – not what someone else can give, but what they can give. A monthly gift. An annual gift. An endowment contribution, if that is within reach. A decision, made quietly, to be part of keeping Amelia's story alive.

Be Part of the Legacy

A gift to the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum Endowment Fund is an investment in every woman who will ever stand in that doorway and feel the electricity of possibility. To make your gift today, visit:

www.ameliaearhartmuseum.org/donate

Alexandra Kindrat recognized as a Notable Concordian and Recipient of the John F. Lemieux Medal



The Ninety-Nines is proud to recognize **Dr. Alexandra Kindrat**, a longtime member of The Ninety-Nines, licensed pilot, aerospace researcher, and distinguished leader, on the occasion of her designation as a Notable Concordia Alumna and recipient of the John F. Lemieux Medal (2026).

A dedicated member of the Eastern Ontario Chapter of The Ninety-Nines, and formerly of the Quebec Chapter, where she served as Scholarship and Vice Chair, Dr. Kindrat demonstrates

an enduring commitment to advancing women in aviation. She continues her service to The Ninety-Nines as a member of the Publications Committee and as a Trustee of the Museum of Women Pilots, contributing to the preservation of aviation heritage and the advancement of women in flight.

Dr. Kindrat holds a Ph.D. from Concordia University, with advanced training in physiology and neuroscience from McGill University, specialized studies in human spaceflight from the International Space University, and executive education from Harvard University, reflecting a career at the forefront of aviation, aerospace, and human performance.

A recipient of the prestigious Ninety-Nines Amelia Earhart Academic Scholarship, she exemplifies the highest standards of academic achievement and aviation leadership. Her distinguished aerospace career includes research at NASA's Johnson Space Center and aboard the International Space Station, advancing

mission-critical knowledge in astronaut health, vision, and human performance, with lasting contributions to both space exploration and aviation human factors.

Dr. Kindrat has also contributed to global aerospace collaboration through her leadership with the International Astronautical Federation, serving on the Human Space Endeavors Committee and chairing international sessions that unite experts from space agencies, academia, and industry.

She continues to play a key role in Canada's space ecosystem as Co-Organizer and Session Chair of the 2026 Canadian Space Health Research Network Symposium, leading national dialogue in human spaceflight, aerospace medicine, and space health innovation.

An accomplished scholar and author, her work includes peer-reviewed research, NASA technical contributions, and the 2026 publication of her children's book, *Iza and Liza Fly to the Moon*, inspiring future generations of aviators and explorers.

Her honours include the Women in Aerospace Educator Award, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Educator Achievement Award, and Canada's Elsie MacGill Northern Lights Award, in addition to the Amelia Earhart Academic Scholarship.

In recognition of her outstanding leadership, scholarly achievement, and enduring contributions to aviation and aerospace, The Ninety-Nines proudly celebrate Dr. Alexandra Kindrat on this distinguished honour – an aviator whose career reflects the spirit of exploration, excellence, and service that continues to inspire women in flight around the world.

Careers

Just Decide To Try

By Donna Miller, Colorado Chapter



Earlier this year, a young woman made history, becoming the first woman from the United States to ski solo and unsupported across 700 miles of Antarctica to the South Pole. I found myself captivated by Monet Izbeth's story – not only because of the brutal enormity of the feat itself, the 40-below winds clawing across endless ice, or the 250 pounds of food and gear she dragged behind her for 57 days, but because

she seemed so startlingly ordinary right up until the moment she began.

That is what I admire most about her spirit. She was not born into some mythic version of greatness. In fact, when she first

decided to attempt the journey, she did not even know how to ski. What she possessed instead was something quieter and far more familiar: the willingness to learn. "I understood it wasn't a lack of ability holding me back," she said. "It was fear. Fear of failing. Fear of committing to something so vast, I might not survive it. That didn't feel like a good enough excuse. So, I decided to try."

I think often about those words, especially in relation to aviation. So much of flying demands that we confront the same instinct to retreat from what feels impossibly large. The fear of failure is persuasive; it whispers practicalities, warns of expense, exhaustion, uncertainty. And aviation asks much from us, for time, discipline, sacrifice, and perseverance on the days when progress feels painfully slow. Yet the reward is not merely the achievement itself.

Long before I imagined flying as a career, I imagined something else entirely: myself decades from now, sitting in a rocking chair in my nineties, haunted by a single question. What would have happened if I had pursued aviation? Even if the attempt had ended in spectacular failure, at least the question would no longer remain unanswered. At the time, that felt more important to me than success itself.

There is another part of Monet Izbeth's story that lingers with me. She once said, "My background isn't in elite sports and mountaineering. It's in curiosity, persistence, and learning by doing." Isn't that the story for all pilots? None of us were born with wings. We simply followed a curiosity strong enough to pull us toward the sky, and once there, we learned the only way aviation truly allows us to learn: by doing.

I recently read an article describing Monet as a "solo travel expert," and I loved the quiet transformation contained within

that title. A woman driven first by curiosity became, through persistence and commitment, an expert in her field. She trained relentlessly for a reality she had never experienced, dragging enormous tires across sand to simulate the resistance of Antarctic sleds.

That same transformation is visible every time I watch new student pilots walk into an airport for a first lesson. There is something unmistakable in their enthusiasm – a kind of luminous anticipation. They do not yet know how much they have to learn, but they arrive eager anyway, drawn by the possibility of flight. And that willingness to begin, despite uncertainty, is where every aviator starts. Some of those students will one day become experts themselves: captains, flight instructors, professionals whose confidence will seem effortless to those watching from the outside.

But first, like Monet standing at the edge of Antarctica, they simply decide to try. —

The Mental Runway

Squeezed by Circumstances



Tammy Barlette

*Tucson Chapter,
Founder and CEO of
Crosscheck Mental
Performance Training*

I recently read a line in *The Quiet Place* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss that made me pause: "But if our circumstances make us what we are, then we are all victims."

That thought really stuck with me.

In aviation, it can be incredibly easy to fall into the trap of believing our circumstances determine our mindset, our confidence, or even our future success. A difficult instructor. A failed check ride. A scary in-flight event. Weather delays. Maintenance issues. Financial pressure. A season of low confidence after one bad flight.

The reality is that many of these things are outside our control, but our response to them is not. That distinction matters more than most pilots realize. Mental performance training is not about pretending difficult circumstances do not exist. It is about recognizing what is within our control and intentionally directing our mental energy there instead of fighting things we cannot change.

Unfortunately, many people spend enormous amounts of mental energy fighting reality. They replay unfair situations in their minds, obsess over outcomes they cannot control, or mentally spiral over "what if" scenarios that have not even happened.

That mental drain is costly. It steals focus, confidence, composure, and often performance itself.

One of the most powerful skills a pilot can develop is self-awareness. Recognition is key. We must learn to recognize when

our thoughts are productive and when they are simply consuming energy without creating forward movement.

Can you control the weather, a maintenance issue that cancels a flight after hours of preparation, or another person's behavior and decision-making? No. But you can control how you prepare, your professionalism, your effort, your mindset, your recovery after disappointment, and the meaning you assign to difficult moments.

That is where growth happens. This does not mean pilots should suppress frustration or pretend they are unaffected by adversity. We are human. But there is a difference between acknowledging disappointment and building an identity around being a victim of circumstances.

The "poor me" mindset is dangerous because it quietly removes personal agency. Once we believe our circumstances are fully responsible for our emotions, motivation, or performance, we stop looking for ways to adapt and improve.

The strongest aviators are not the ones who avoid setbacks. They are the ones who refuse to surrender their mindset to them. Pressure has a way of revealing our habits of thought. Under stress, we often discover whether we have trained our minds to focus on solutions or fixate on problems, whether we recover quickly or stay emotionally stuck, and whether we spend energy where it helps us or where it drains us.

That is why mental performance training matters. Not because it eliminates adversity, but because it teaches us how to respond to adversity with greater awareness and intention.

Circumstances will always be part of aviation. Delays, mistakes, uncertainty, pressure, and setbacks are unavoidable.

But being ruled by them is not. —



Tribute to Judy Phelps

*~ A Life That Lifted Others**

1963 - 2026

Some people teach aviation.
Others transform it.
Judy Phelps did both.

Few individuals leave a mark on aviation as deep and enduring as Judy Phelps. A gifted pilot, instructor, examiner, mentor, and advocate, she devoted her life to helping others become safer, more skilled, and more confident aviators. Her influence reached far beyond any single airplane, living on in every pilot she trained, every student who carried her lessons forward, and the countless lives she touched along the way.

Judy's remarkable aviation journey began in 1994 at the restaurant overlooking the runway at Santa Paula Airport in California. As a waitress and single mother, she watched airplanes take off and land from the outdoor patio, captivated by the freedom and possibility of flight. What began as curiosity soon became a passion that would shape the rest of her life.

At Santa Paula Airport, she met her future husband, Clay Phelps, owner of CP Aviation. Together, they built not only a successful business but also a community centered on excellence, safety, and mentorship. Over three decades with Judy as co-owner and vice president of CP Aviation, the flight school grew from a single Cessna 150 into one of the nation's most respected flight training organizations, training pilots from around the world.

Judy earned her Private Pilot Certificate in 1999, under the instruction of her father-in-law, Bob Phelps. Her path was not easy. She struggled with confidence and battled airsickness, challenges that would later become among her greatest strengths as an instructor. Through determination and training with her

mentor, Rich Stowell, a widely-known expert in loss-of-control prevention, stick-and-rudder skills, spin recovery, and emergency maneuver training, she overcame her fears and learned that knowledge and preparation replace fear with confidence. That lesson became the foundation of her teaching philosophy and the gift she shared with thousands of pilots throughout her career.

Within just eighteen months, Judy earned her Instrument, Commercial, CFI, and CFII ratings. Her passion for teaching quickly became her life's calling. Throughout her career, she endorsed more than 400 pilot certificates, conducted more than 350 checkrides as a Designated Pilot Examiner, and helped countless pilots discover abilities they never knew they had.

Judy was a tireless advocate for women in aviation, with her influence extending far beyond the cockpit. An active member of The Ninety-Nines from the day after she earned her Private Certificate, she encouraged and mentored countless women pursuing their dreams of flight. She generously shared her expertise at aviation events, including International 99s aviation conferences, inspiring new generations of pilots through her example, leadership, and enthusiasm. She served as Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Ventura County Chapter, helping it grow from a small group of a few dozen women pilots to one of the largest and most active chapters of The Ninety-Nines, with over 110 members.

She was also a popular instructor with the Ventura County Ninety-Nines Pilot Proficiency Program, teaching hundreds of pilots each year. Whether explaining airspace, introducing pilots to ForeFlight and new technology, or leading aviation safety seminars and webinars, Judy had a rare gift for making complex subjects understandable and enjoyable. She also co-authored research on instructor retention and student success.

Her commitment to future generations was equally profound. She helped establish Ventura County's Aviation Career Day, introducing thousands of middle and high school students to careers in aviation and aerospace. She spent fourteen years mentoring young women at EAA's GirlVenture Camp at EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, encouraging them to dream bigger and reach higher. Through scholarships, youth programs, airshows, and countless conversations on airport ramps, she inspired young people to believe they belonged in aviation.

Perhaps no aspect of her work better reflected her dedication to safety than Emergency Maneuver Training (EMT). After experiencing Rich Stowell's training firsthand, Judy became an early advocate for integrating upset recovery and loss-of-control training into routine flight instruction. She helped countless pilots replace fear with knowledge and uncertainty with confidence, earning a reputation as one of the nation's most respected EMT instructors.

Many first-responder pilots were trained by Judy at CP Aviation. Among those she trained were Alaska State Troopers. Rather than hiring already-rated pilots, the agency entrusted Judy with training some of its troopers to become pilots. Over the years, she trained more than fifty Alaska State Troopers, guiding them through private and instrument certification and advanced emergency maneuver training. These troopers return to CP Aviation for their recurrent training. Judy also trained pilots from several other government agencies, including the California Highway Patrol, U.S. National Parks Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Forestry, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Her accomplishments earned numerous honors, including the Southwest Section of The Ninety-Nines' Professional Woman Pilot of the Year in 2008 and the Western Pacific Region Flight Instructor of the Year in 2010. Judy was named the National Flight Instructor of the Year in 2011, a fitting honor for someone who dedicated her life to helping others realize their aviation dreams.

Judy also became the first woman to earn the NAFI Master CFI-Aerobatic designation. For more than twenty years, she was recognized as a Master Instructor and ultimately achieved Instructor Emeritus status. In 2025, the Alaska Department of Public Safety honored her extraordinary contributions with the Career Aviation Service Award.

More important than any award, however, was the impact Judy had on people. She was known for her warmth, generosity, humor, and willingness to help others succeed. Students became friends, friends became family, and countless aviators credit her with changing the course of their flying careers and, in some cases, saving their lives.

Judy also dedicated herself to serving her local community. She was a founding member and longtime leader of the Aviation Museum of Santa Paula, supporting efforts to preserve local aviation history and encouraging future

aviators through youth programs. As a member and former president of the Santa Paula Rotary Club, she participated in countless charitable initiatives, supporting scholarships, holiday programs, and community projects that improved others' lives.

Judy was an active member of EAA International Aerobatic Club (IAC), the premier U.S. organization dedicated to aerobatic flight and the governing body for aerobatic competitions. In memory of her close friend and aerobatic coach, Vicki Cruse, Judy established the Vicki Cruse Memorial EMT Scholarship, which she presented each year at the IAC annual dinner at EAA AirVenture. Over the years, her annual donations of CP Aviation gift certificates for Emergency Maneuver Training and Tailwheel Training, used as raffle prizes, enabled the Ventura County 99s to offer as many as six annual flight training scholarships to women for their initial and advanced flight training. She was a founding member of the Society of Aviation Flight Educators (SAFE) and helped it grow into the prominent professional organization of aviation educators it is today.

The Boys and Girls Club of Santa Clara Valley is another community nonprofit organization that Judy supported through donations of her time and gift certificates for Discovery Flights and Flights to Catalina Island, which were used in their live auctions.

Judy was an enthusiastic participant and performer at the annual Wings Over Camarillo Air Show. When she was not in the air performing aerobatic maneuvers, she was in the CP Aviation tent signing autographs, answering questions, and encouraging youth to learn to fly and become a part of the aviation community.

On May 20, 2026, Judy Phelps "flew west" after a courageous battle with terminal cancer. While her journey on earth came to an end, her influence remains woven into the fabric of aviation. Her legacy lives on in the flight school she helped build, the organizations she strengthened, the communities she served, and the thousands of pilots whose lives she touched.

From a waitress on an airport restaurant patio watching airplanes take off and land to becoming one of the nation's most respected flight instructors, Judy's story was never simply about flying. It was about believing in people, helping them discover their potential, and giving them the confidence to reach heights they never imagined.

The skies are safer because she flew. The aviation community is stronger because she taught. Generations of pilots will continue to soar because Judy Phelps believed in them before they believed in themselves.

Blue skies and tailwinds, Judy. Your lessons, your example, and your spirit will continue to guide and inspire aviators for generations to come.

** This article is a collaborative effort of several present and former members of the Ventura County Ninety-Nines.*



The Ventura County 99s Chapter plans to establish the

Judy Phelps Memorial Scholarship for Emergency Maneuver Training

as a perpetual scholarship through The Ninety-Nines Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund. Friends, admirers, and students of Judy Phelps can learn more about this scholarship at

JudyPhelpsEMTScholarship.org



Myrle Rumble Caldwell

1898-1992



Myrle Rumble Caldwell was born in 1898 in Wayne County, Iowa. She married Cy Cassidy Caldwell on Christmas Day in 1920. Cy was a famous pilot from Montreal, Canada, who had flown in World War I. Cy and Myrle lived in Cleveland, Ohio, in the 1920s. In 1928, Myrle began her flight training, along with seven other women at Dungan Universal Air School at Cleveland Hopkins Airfield. Myrle's family in Iowa did not know that Myrle was learning how to fly. She made history as the first female solo flight from the school the week of June 9, 1929.

In the late 1920s, Cy Caldwell was a test pilot for the Glen Martin Company and later a pilot

for the Goodrich Rubber Company in Cleveland. Myrle would often accompany him on his flights. One such flight was the Ford Reliability Tour of 1925, in which they flew a Martin Model 70. In September of 1928, Cy and Myrle flew a Fairchild to Los Angeles, California's Mines Field for the 1928 Air Races. Col. A. P. Gildersleeve of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce accompanied the couple on this trip to petition for the 1929 Air Races to be held in Cleveland. Their 30.5-hour flight route would take them through Indianapolis, Wichita, Amarillo, El Paso, Tucson, and San Diego.

The Caldwells and Gildersleeve's trip was successful, and the 1929 Air Races were held in Cleveland August 24 to September 2. The event would draw 300,000 spectators from around the country. Even though Myrle had just soloed in July of that year, she dedicated herself to training for a closed course race at the event that August. Along with Patty Willis, they were the youngest entrants for the air derby. Myrle would not earn her Private Pilot's License, No. 7718, until September of that year. She kept the aircraft that she was going to fly a secret. Some sources speculated that it could be the Travel Air Type R "Mystery Ship" that was built in Wichita and unveiled at the Cleveland Air Races. But, it is more likely that she would have flown the Fairchild FC-2 that Cy owned, and she was most familiar with. Indicative of the times, one of the headlines about the race featured in *The Boston Globe* said, "Three Women Who Will take Part in National Air Races, Any One of Whom Should Fare Well in a Beauty Contest" referencing Myrle Caldwell, Marvel Crosson, and Gladys O'Donnell.

Just one month prior to the 1929 Air Races in Cleveland, Cy's airplane, "Miss Detroit," went down in Lake Erie on a flight from Cleveland to Detroit. The co-pilot of the flight was lost. But, Cy managed to swim four miles in rough seas to hail a boat that was then sent to rescue passenger Mrs. Robert Little, wife of the pastor of First Presbyterian church of Cedar Rapids. The only other passenger on board, the mechanic, was also rescued by a passing boat. This story, along with Myrle's joyful reaction to being reunited with her husband, was featured in newspapers as far away as Miami, Florida.

Cy stepped away from flying to write for *Aero Digest* in the 1930s. It seems that Myrle also took a "back seat" in her flying pursuits at this time, since not much can be found about her flying career after the 1929 air races. We know that they lived in New York City in the 1940s, where Cy wrote, analyzed the war, and became associate editor for *Aero Digest*. Myrle would accompany Cy to speaking engagements, such as the Tulsa Airwomen luncheon in 1940, where Cy was the featured speaker. Later, they would retire in Wheatland, California, where Myrle was active in the Ladies Aid of her church, and she and Cy would continue to enjoy traveling and sightseeing. In 1958, Myrle was named an alternate delegate to the Legion Auxiliary State Convention in Sacramento. Myrle passed away in 1992 at 96 years of age.

– By Alison A. Adams, *Nebraska Chapter, Chair*

Photo from The Boston Globe on Saturday, August 10, 1929, with a caption reading "Mrs Cy Caldwell, who has announced her intentions of entering the closed course events in the 1929 National Air Races. The type of plane Mrs. Caldwell will use will be revealed later."

Geraldine Grey Loffredo (Margaret L. M. Hotchkiss)

January 29, 1892 – January 9, 1949



Born in January, 1892, to Charles William Hotchkiss and Hattie L. Hotchkiss (née Coates) in Battle Creek, Michigan, Margaret L. M. Hotchkiss came into the world knowing she was destined to soar past boundaries placed on her by society, confident the ground was no place for a woman of her courage. She pursued an education at Cornell University and later married Italian photographer Umberto Loffredo in 1912. Umberto was initially concerned for Margaret's safety and well-

being as a woman who completely redefined the expectations of a housewife, but he eventually became supportive of her aspirations and lifestyle after warming up to her keen interest in aeronautics. During WWI, Margaret served as a chief mechanic with the U.S. Ambulance Corps.

Margaret took the professional name "Geraldine Grey" to begin her pursuit of parachute jumping in 1914. The thrill of the fall had Geraldine jumping out of hot air balloons at country fairs, but in 1917, she made her first daring jump from a plane. Although she felt guilty about traveling for her jumps and leaving her two Chow-Chow dogs at home, she continued her parachuting and achieved international fame in July, 1922, when she jumped 1,600 feet at the Centocelle military flying grounds in Rome, Italy. Geraldine represented the United States in a jumping competition in Rome, also in 1922, where she used a parachute of her own design and jumped a record-breaking 3,500 feet. She was the first woman to ever parachute jump in Italy.

Geraldine went on to achieve wider fame when she earned her Pilot License in 1925, training at Rochester Airport under Bill Dunlop and becoming the first female pilot in Buffalo and only the sixth female pilot in the nation. She piloted excursions over Niagara Falls in a tri-motored plane in 1930, and in 1931, Geraldine's black-and-white picture appeared across hundreds of U.S. newspapers as word circulated that she was planning a transatlantic flight from New York to Italy as a gesture of goodwill between the two countries. At the time, she hoped to use the Bellanca monoplane "Liberty," owned by Otis Hillig, who had previously flown the aircraft from New York to Copenhagen. In August, 1931, newspapers announced Geraldine would postpone the transatlantic flight, possibly due to financial reasons. Although Geraldine received a promise of full cooperation from General Italo Balbo, Italy's Minister of Air in 1933, she never embarked on her transatlantic flight.

Geraldine and Umberto settled in Rome in 1947 after Umberto sold his photography studio. She died in Buffalo in 1949 after a battle with a month-long illness.

– By Kayla D. Taylor, Ph.D. student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, *Friend of The 99s*

Photo: In 1931, Geraldine Grey Loffredo made plans to pilot the first transatlantic flight from New York to Rome on the Bellanca monoplane "Liberty." (Covington Virginian, Volume 17, Number 334, 28 August 1931)

Melba Mae Gorby Beard

March 21, 1907 – November 14, 1987



On March 21, 1907, Melba Mae Gorby was born in the coal mining town of New Martinsville, West Virginia. Always adventurous, Melba became a trailblazing aviator and flight instructor. In 1928, she flew the new Brunner-Winkle Bird biplane solo. In a few short months, Melba earned Private Pilot License No. 9116. Melba loved flying. Soon she was in California, where aviation was being embraced. In 1929, she was a founding member of The Ninety Nines. Over the years, Melba served the organization in numerous volunteer roles.

As one of the few rated women Air Transport Pilots (ATP) in California, Melba was a popular flight instructor. One of her aviation students was William Beard, a Cal-Tech professor and son of two illustrious American historians, who signed up for flying lessons from the well-known flight instructor and premier navigator. Melba not only taught him to fly, but they eloped.

According to the story in the October 8, 1933, *Los Angeles Times*, when Melba and William flew their plane to Yuma, Arizona, they “piloted alternately,” because they were both pilots and that was the nature of their relationship. After the quick ceremony on October 5, they hand-lettered “Mr and Mrs Wm Beard” on the side of their airplane for the flight back to California.

They were an adventurous team of aviators, scuba divers, and doers. Melba continued flight instruction and air racing. In 1935, Melba Beard won the top prize in women’s aviation at that time, The Amelia Earhart Trophy, presented to Melba by her good friend, Amelia, at the National Air Races in Cleveland, Ohio.

With all the flying she did, Melba became a licensed aircraft mechanic. She began restoring old planes. William shared in her projects. He even recruited some of the California Institute of Technology students to get involved. Melba continued flying into her 70s. In the summer of 1977, Melba flew in the annual Air Race Classic on a team. She is honored in the prestigious OX5 Aviation Pioneers Hall of Fame for early aviation pioneers associated with airplanes with the Curtiss OX-5 engine.

In 1987, Melba Beard flew West, at age 80, after a lifetime in aviation – as a trailblazing pilot, flight instructor, licensed aircraft mechanic, and restorer of classic airplanes.

– By Penny Rafferty Hamilton, Ph.D., *Idaho Chapter*

Photo: In 1931, Melba Gorby at age 24 was a celebrity when the young pilot returned to her hometown of New Martinsville, West Virginia. (West Virginia & Regional History Center)

Jessie Maude “Chubbie” Miller Pugh

1902 (Australia) – December 16, 1972 (England)



Born in a remote Western Australia mining town, Jessie Maude Beveridge learned self-reliance. Jessie was thin and slight. The ironic nickname, “Chubbie,” stuck with her. In 1919, she married journalist George Keith Miller. Polar opposites, the union quickly floundered. Suffering from two miscarriages, plus the deaths

of her father and brother, Jessie decided to visit her relatives in England. To raise money for the expensive trip, vivacious Jessie sold vacuum cleaners door to door.

In England, Jessie and former RAF pilot Bill Lancaster teamed up for a record-setting, dangerous flight from England to Australia in a small Avro Avian biplane named “Red Rose.” Jessie helped finance the trip and handled all the administrative details. With no previous flying experience, plucky Jessie won fame as the first woman to complete an England-to-Australia flight. The flight was not without challenges: a forced landing at the Burmese capital of Rangoon, a deadly serpent in their cockpit, and a crash-landing in Indonesia. Both were slightly injured. They waited on airplane repairs in Singapore.

Jessie became the first woman to fly more than 8,000 miles, the first woman to cross the equator in a plane to the southern hemisphere, and the first woman to fly from north to south over the Australian continent. She learned to fly and to service the plane on the journey, during which she and Bill fell in love. Jessie was dubbed the first “international aviatrix” of the southern hemisphere.

Megastar Jessie was offered a Hollywood movie deal. In 1928, they moved to the United States. The Hollywood promises evaporated. Jessie flew on, joining her American sky sisters in the 1929 Women’s Air Derby, just after obtaining Pilot License No. 6014. Jessie completed the race in third place in the light plane division. In 1930, Jessie set the women’s cross country east-west record in an Alexander Eaglerock Bullet. A few days later, she made the return flight, with 21 hours and 45 minutes in the air, eclipsing the west-to-east, coast-to-coast women’s record.

In December, 1930, Jessie was back in the news when she was missing for four days after taking off from Havana, Cuba, en route to Miami, Florida. Presumed dead, Jessie miraculously landed on the Bahamian island of Andros. In the U.S., Jessie demonstrated small planes and amphibians and gave gliding exhibitions. In 1932, she came to public attention again when Bill Lancaster was accused of killing Haden Clarke, a male American writer, for whom Jessie had left him. He was acquitted. But, Jessie took refuge in England from the relentless media hounds.

In 1936 Jessie married English military aviator, John B.W. Pugh. Jessie Miller Pugh flew West in 1972. Two books tell her story: *The Fabulous Flying Mrs. Miller: An Australian’s True Story of Adventure, Danger, Romance and Murder*, published in 2017, and *The Lost Pilots: The Spectacular Rise and Scandalous Fall of Aviation’s Golden Couple*, published by Macmillan, London in 2018. In 1985, an Australian TV miniseries called *The Lancaster Miller Affair* was broadcast.

– By Penny Rafferty Hamilton, Ph.D., *Idaho Chapter*

Photo: In 1929, Jessie Miller in her plane during the Women’s First Air Derby. (Henry Schnitger Photograph Collection/Saint Louis University Libraries Archives & Digital Services)

2026 SPRING FIRST WINGS AWARDS

Congratulations to the 16 women who are recipients of the Amelia Earhart Memorial Scholarship Fund (AEMSF) 2026 Spring First Wings Awards! With applications from around the world, the selected awardees are aspiring pilots in the United States and Canada representing 12 chapters and eight sections. Current awardees are at various stages of flight training progress.

For the Spring 2026 First Wings cycle, \$65,000 was available for the trustees to award. The First Wings award is a progressive scholarship of up to \$6,000 toward an initial Pilot Certificate. Payments are based on specific flight training milestone achievements, which are:

- Written exam \$500
- Solo \$2,500
- Long cross-country \$2,000
- Private certificate \$1,000

The name of this award program has changed over the years. Awards for our student pilot members began in 2001 as the New Pilot Award. In 2013, the award was renamed Fly Now. Most recently it became First Wings, with awards given bi-annually.



DeAnna Ankrum

Mid-Columbia Chapter,
Northwest Section
Mentor: Lynn Harbinson

I'm honored to receive the First Wings Scholarship and grateful for the support it will provide as I continue to pursue my aviation goals. This scholarship will help me earn my

Private Pilot Certificate and work towards my Commercial Pilot Certificate. My dream began when I was 11, after participating in a Young Eagles flight. Despite the obstacles over the years, I'm excited that my dream is becoming a reality. I look forward to sharing my passion for aviation with other women and students and inspiring them to follow their own aviation dreams.



Jennifer Dunstan

San Diego Chapter,
Southwest Section
Mentor: Crystal Hoffman

I'm honored to receive the AEMSF First Wings Award. When I decided to stop being a "passenger princess" and become a pilot, the San Diego 99s have been the ultimate support group

in my aviation journey. Newly elected as their Vice Chair, my determination to earn my Private Pilot Certificate is now tenfold and this award allows me to fast track my training. I'm excited to attend future fly-ins as PIC and to lend a helping hand wherever I can for the next generation of student pilots that enter our chapter.



Maple Castellanos

British Columbia Coast Chapter,
West Canada Section
Mentor: Collette Morin

I'm a high school student, competitive swimmer, and aspiring professional pilot with a strong passion for aviation and human performance. Competitive

swimming has taught me discipline, focus, resilience, and the importance of staying calm under pressure – qualities I hope to bring into a future career in aviation. I'm especially interested in the connection between health, performance, and flight, and how pilots can operate at their best both mentally and physically. I love challenging myself and am very excited to fly professionally one day for my career.



Grayson Emery

San Diego Chapter,
Southwest Section
Mentor: Claudette DeCourley

I'm so thankful to be awarded this scholarship, as it will help me immensely in finishing the first step in my journey towards becoming a pilot! My ultimate goal is to gain my Commercial

Rating so I will be able to fly as a career. This scholarship will make it possible to be able to afford the hours of training that I need to achieve that goal. I'm looking forward to digging in and learning as much as I can for this portion of my journey!



Sarah Fisher

Carolinas Chapter,
Southeast Section
Mentor: Heidi Pritchard

I'm Sarah Fisher, mother, wife, and full-time database administrator who finally chose to pursue a dream I'd carried since childhood by learning to fly. Starting aviation in my 30s, with

family life and responsibilities already in motion, has made the journey challenging but deeply meaningful. I've stood on the shoulders of people who supported me every step of the way, and I know I wouldn't be here without them. I'm profoundly grateful. I'm building the life I want, one lesson, one workday, one family dinner, and one brave decision at a time.



Megan Fitzgerald

Air Hearts-Utah Chapter,
Southwest Section
Mentor: Morgan Potts

I'm honored to receive the Amelia Earhart First Wings Award. There's something indescribable about watching the world from above that continues to humble

me every time I fly. Aviation and The 99s have blessed me with a community who shares the same incredible passion for flying. I'm always reminded there is something new to learn every day. My Private Pilot Certificate has propelled me into Instrument training, which is deeply important to me as I become a skillful pilot. The truest way to honor this award is to give back to the community that has given me so much.



Jessica Green

Arkansas Chapter,
South Central Section
Mentor: Caitlin Hagan

After a lifetime in athletics, I'm reinventing myself as a pilot. I coach mountain biking in Arkansas. After overcoming challenges during my FAA medical process, I began

pursuing my Private Pilot Certificate. I discovered The 99s and was inspired by their mission. As a proud Arkansas Chapter member, I contribute photography and creativity while training for my ratings. My goal is to help women build confidence, resilience, and perseverance through aviation.



Jodie-Lee Hostetler

All-Ohio Chapter,
North Central Section
Mentor: Debra Henrichs

I discovered my passion for aviation over Montana's Big Sky and flew with my uncle out of Dawson County Airport (KGDV). I knew when the time was right, I would start an aviation career.

After moving to Ohio in 2022, I began pursuing flight training and am currently preparing for my check ride. Once I earn my Private Pilot Certificate, I plan to continue directly into Instrument training and work toward becoming a CFI. I hope to combine my extensive teaching experience with aviation by mentoring future pilots. As I continue, I hope to inspire women to pursue aviation with gumption and determination.



Brooklyn Kochert

All-Ohio Chapter,
North Central Section
Mentor: Sarah Smith

I'm a small-town girl with a simple dream: to give back to the community that shaped me. My passion for aviation grew alongside my love for mechanics, adventure, and the discipline

flying demands. After earning my Private Pilot Certificate this summer, I plan to take the winter off to welcome my first child. I will continue training in spring 2027, working toward an Instrument Rating, followed by Commercial Pilot and CFI Certifications. I hope to combine my aviation and technical backgrounds into a career flying for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources while supporting the people and communities I call home.



Elizabeth McDaniel

Lake Erie Chapter,
North Central Section
Mentor: Jessica Maslach

I'm currently pursuing my Private Pilot Certificate and am grateful to be a member of The 99s and a recipient of this scholarship supporting my flight training. I actively contribute to my local

chapter through fundraising and newsletter initiatives, and I'm passionate about expanding workforce development opportunities in aviation, especially for women and girls. My goal is to fly safely for enjoyment while helping others discover that same joy. I hope to soon fly myself and my two children somewhere over the Caribbean, a goal we may just reach this year, thanks to this scholarship.



Skye Newsome

Kentucky Bluegrass Chapter,
North Central Section
Mentor: Terri Donner

I'm a student at Eastern Kentucky University studying aerospace management. I'm currently working toward my Private Pilot Certificate at a Part 61 flight school while

actively participating in organizations such as The 99s and Women in Aviation International. I plan to continue my flight training as I work toward becoming a professional pilot. I hope to encourage and inspire other young women in aviation, just as The 99s have inspired and supported me throughout my journey.



Samantha Rengstorf

Arkansas Chapter,
South Central Section
Mentor: Grace Cowherd

My name is Samantha Rengstorf and I have just finished my first year at Oklahoma State University in their professional pilot program. Achieving my Private Pilot Certificate is the

first step in my career. I hope to one day become an airline pilot and learning the basics is the most important part of my goal. Earning my Private Pilot Certificate will mean that I'm officially a pilot and I'm excited to be onto the next steps soon.



Ruby Roussel

Quebec Chapter,
East Canada Section
Mentor: Olivia Corriveau

I'm a third-year student at Mount Allison University, majoring in philosophy while completing my flight training with Moncton Flight College. After my first flight at 11 years old, I caught the

aviation bug and fell in love with the freedom of seeing the world from above. Shortly after beginning flight training, I became the secretary of the Quebec Chapter. I'm honoured to receive the First Wings Scholarship and grateful to be part of such a supportive community of women in aviation as I work toward my goal of becoming an airline pilot for Air Canada!



Amanda Straight

Eastern New England
Chapter,
New England Section
Mentor: Karen Mitchell

Aviation has been my lifelong passion, and I'm thrilled to finally pursue my Private Pilot Certificate. Over the last two decades, I have focused on

raising my daughters and advancing my education to support my family as a single mother. Working for the government has allowed me to develop strong leadership, discipline, and problem-solving skills that will continue to guide me throughout my aviation journey. Receiving this scholarship is an incredible honor. Once I earn my Certificate, I plan to become a CFI and use my experience to encourage and support future aviators.



Yuan Zhao

All-Ohio Chapter,
North Central Section
Mentor: Jun Oikawa

I was born and raised in China, where aviation once felt out of reach, but my journey as an English translator, cultural exchange participant, and now flight attendant led me to

discover flying. I'm currently training for my Private Pilot Certificate while balancing airline and FBO work to fund my lessons. Through The 99s, I have found mentorship, encouraged other women to take discovery flights, and become active in my local chapter. Once I earn my Certificate, I plan to continue advanced ratings, pursue an airline pilot career, and mentor more women pursuing aviation dreams.



Alyson Zuidema

Mt. Shasta Chapter,
Southwest Section
Mentor: Nancy Overton

I'm so thankful to be awarded this scholarship, as it will help me immensely in finishing the first step in my journey towards becoming a pilot! My ultimate goal is to gain my Commercial

Rating so I will be able to fly as a career. This scholarship will make it possible to be able to afford the hours of training that I need to achieve that goal. I'm looking forward to digging in and learning as much as I can for this portion of my journey!



NELL “MICKEY” STEVENSON BRIGHT

The Last Living WASP

*A Ninety-Nines Legacy of Courage,
Service, & Trailblazing Spirit*

– By Samantha Joy Inguanzo,
Florida Goldcoast Chapter, Southeast Section

At 105 years young and having recently celebrated her birthday on June 20, 2026, Nell “Mickey” Stevenson Bright endures as the last living member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), an American treasure from World War II.

Born in Canyon, Texas, this remarkable Ninety-Nine flew every type of military aircraft operated by the Army Air Forces during World War II – towing live-fire targets, conducting strafing runs, and executing night searchlight missions – while the nation’s men served overseas.

Her story, once classified and known as the “best-kept secret of WWII,” now shines brightly in documentaries, Commemorative Air Force pages, and National WASP WWII Museum archives. As one of only 1,074 women to earn WASP wings, Nell demonstrated that women could master the cockpit with consummate skill and a profound heart.

From her current residence in Salt Lake City, Utah, she continues to share her experiences with the same sharp wit and quiet patriotism that sustained her through dusty training at Avenger Field and flak-filled skies over Biggs.

Mickey’s passion for the sky awakened early. At age 8, her father paid a dollar for her to ride in a World War I biplane, which ignited a lifelong fire within her. She knew she would fly. By age 19, she had earned a degree in English and economics from West Texas A&M – a highly uncommon accomplishment in 1940. To fly, she sacrificed many lunches, persuaded nine men to partner with her in purchasing a Taylorcraft, and logged over 75 hours at English Field in Amarillo.

After reading an article in *Flying* magazine about Jacqueline Cochran’s recruitment of women pilots, she recognized both a personal calling and a national duty. “It was something our country needed,” she later reflected with characteristic clarity. Meeting the requirements of being 21 years old with 35 flight hours, Mickey pursued more than clouds – she embraced a higher purpose. After an interview with Ms. Cochran, Mickey received a Western Union telegram announcing her selection.

Training at Avenger Field with Class 43-W-7 proved every bit as demanding as that faced by male cadets. Dust, wind, and unrelenting rigor forged unbreakable





bonds among the women. Their sisterhood provided essential sustenance. Mickey was one of only 20 WASP selected as the first women trained on the formidable B-25 bomber at Mather Field. Mastering that twin-engine powerhouse filled her with well-earned pride and illustrated vividly what women could accomplish when afforded the opportunity. Often called an “experiment,” these were the first women to fly military aircraft and, to this day, are still the only all-women air base in U.S. history.

Her wartime service with the 6th Tow Target Squadron at Biggs Field, along with assignments at Mather and Deming, embodied both daring and vital contributions. She towed targets for live anti-aircraft practice, flew strafing and gassing runs, and navigated night searchlight operations amid bursting flak.

Mickey and her fellow WASP piloted every aircraft type in the AAF inventory – PT-19s, AT-6s, A-24s, A-25s, B-25s, B-26s, P-47s and beyond. One memorable exchange with the gunners captured her spirit perfectly: “When you learn how to shoot, we’ll come back and fly for you again.” Not all tow pilots survived this dangerous assignment.

She ferried her brother, a B-25 crew chief returning from North Africa, homeward in a bomber – capping the journey with a joyful low-level pass over Canyon. They ferried thousands of planes to Great Falls, Montana, where they were marked with Russian Army stars before shipping off to Siberia to fight the Germans. At Mather, when the Tuskegee Airmen encountered segregation in the officers’ mess, Mickey and other WASP joined them in a quiet yet powerful act of solidarity. These moments reveal the courage and moral character that defined the entire WASP program.

The hidden costs remained considerable. Classified as civilians with the expectation of assuming military duties, WASP received lower pay, were required to purchase their own uniforms, and did not qualify for veteran benefits. Thirty-eight WASP sisters perished in service; their families were denied Gold Star flags. The ladies collected funds to cover their final flight home. The fearless flyers flew any plane they were given, in all weather conditions, and often with only a compass, goggles, and a radio. Only the best were chosen, and even with their considerable skill, they were ordered by Jacqueline Cochran to put on lipstick, as Mickey said she wanted them to “look very nice and ladylike when we got off the airplane.” Deactivated on December 20, 1944, their records stayed sealed for decades. Mickey felt the quiet sting of that invisibility, yet she advanced with grace and resilience.

Following the war, she relocated to Phoenix, Arizona, based on a coin toss with her best friend, and worked as a soda jerk at Luke Air Force Base – where she delighted in meeting pilots – and married an airport mechanic. WASP applying for commercial pilot jobs were turned down. “People didn’t believe us,” Mickey recalls. “They hadn’t heard of the WASP. Airlines wouldn’t even talk to us. You see, we didn’t have an ‘honorable discharge’ since we were civilians.”

Mickey chose a less conventional path and became one of the first female stockbrokers in the region, maintaining a distinguished 50-year career before retiring at the age of 85. Her WASP service remained largely private within the family, with her children unaware of it until their teens. The military’s announcement of

Top: Mickey (3rd row up on the left) during pilot training with her fellow WASP on a PT-19 Fairchild. | Middle: Women Air Force Service Pilots assigned to Camp Davis in North Carolina pose in front of a Beechcraft AT-11. | Bottom: From the book The Women with Silver Wings, “Nell ‘Mickey’ Stevenson Bright, class 43-W-7, poses in front of the B-26 she flew at Biggs Field in late 1944.”

the “first females to fly military aircraft” convinced the WASP to share their story. In 1977, after 33 years of fighting, the WASP gained veteran status; in 2010, they received the Congressional Gold Medal. Mickey’s eyes still sparkle when recounting those long-overdue honors.

As a Life member Ninety-Nine, Mickey persists in the public eye at 105, ensuring younger generations are aware of this essential history.

Her timeless lessons, drawn from over a century of experience, emphasize the value of fortitude, sisterhood, and the deep satisfaction that comes from conquering challenges. Mickey’s enduring wisdom for today’s Ninety-Nines emphasizes the value of dreaming big, maintaining integrity, sharing experiences with eager learners, and uplifting others.

Mickey’s unwavering poise and quiet strength continue to motivate. Through her gentle resilience and lasting grace, we see the finest qualities of a woman pilot – courageous, humble, and always soaring.



Top left: Mickey wearing the Bronze Minuteman Award the Honorary Colonels Corps of Utah National Guard gave her for service to country and community in June 2014. | Top Right: Nell holding the Congressional Gold Medal presented by President Obama in 2010. | Bottom: Nell (middle) with her WASP sisters at an EAA Oshkosh AirVenture fly-in event, where they held a booth and a 99s luncheon for many years until they could no longer travel.



WASP Facts Every Ninety-Nine Needs to Know:

- Over 25,000 women applied to the WASP program; 1,830 were accepted for training.
- Only 1,074 (58%) earned their wings and served as Women Airforce Service Pilots.
- WASP flew every type of military aircraft in the Army Air Forces inventory and delivered over 12,650 aircraft, logging more than 60 million miles.
- They performed essential non-combat missions, including ferrying, target towing for live-fire gunnery practice, strafing and gassing runs, and night searchlight operations – freeing more than 1,100 male pilots for combat duty overseas.
- 38 WASP lost their lives while serving, and due to their civilian status, the U.S. government did not cover their funerals or provide Gold Star flags to their families.
- They were paid less than male pilots, had to purchase their own uniforms, and were denied military veteran status until 1977.
- In 2010, the WASP received the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of their pioneering service 66 years after they were deactivated and records sealed.
- Nell “Mickey” Stevenson Bright (Class 43-W-7) was one of only 20 women selected as the first to train on the B-25 bomber and remains, at 105, the last living WASP.
- As Ninety-Nines, we must keep the WASP legacy alive by sharing their stories with fellow pilots and non-aviators, ensuring their sacrifices for aviation are never forgotten.

Top: A graduation ceremony on August 7, 1943, at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas. Courtesy of the Official National WASP WWII Museum, Sweetwater, Texas | Bottom: WASP standing at attention while in training before being handed orders to report to one of 125 Army air bases or airfields across the U.S.; 23 of those bases were located in Texas.



SHAHARA MURPHY'S JOURNEY

THE IMPORTANCE
OF **MENTORING**

- By Tiana Golding,
*Connecticut Chapter,
New England Section*

Shahara Murphy is a Certified Flight Instructor, former Avelo flight attendant, and aviation student mentor. Her journey is one of dedication, professionalism, and inspiration for the next generation of aviators.

What has your aviation journey entailed?

My aviation journey started when I worked as a flight attendant for Avelo Airlines based out of New Haven, Connecticut. After a year, I trained to be a flight attendant instructor. I would sign off new flight attendants after their Initial Operating Experience (IOE) certifying their ability to meet the duties of an FAA employee. As a lead flight attendant, I regularly communicated with the pilots and would have the opportunity to fly jump-seat on ferry flights. Watching the flight happen in real time impressed me because I appreciate systems and was able to see everything happen from takeoff to landing. I resigned after two years with Avelo and made my decision to be a pilot. Later, I started flight training full time with ATP in Hartford and then transitioned to ATP Georgia. Currently, I'm going through the process of becoming a CFI in Stratford.

Describe your experience with ATP Flight School.

I loved it! It was challenging but I enjoyed learning something new and immersing myself in the environment. Growing up, I loved school and was even an elementary school teacher before becoming a flight attendant.

A few tips for student pilots:

1. Complete ground school before flight training. I recommend Gold Seal ground school because it gives you context and background.
2. Show up even when you're not scheduled, to immerse yourself in the environment.
3. Check rides are a nerve-wracking evaluation for everyone, but schools with stage checks (like ATP) help familiarize you with the process.
4. The Airman Certification Standards (ACS) is a great resource to study.

How do flight attendant training and pilot training compare?

As a flight attendant, I was completely new to aviation. During pilot training, I had context and experience working in the industry. I was used to pilots navigating emergencies and flight attendants responding to their actions. I had to get used to the systems and protocols pilots follow.

What pilot organizations are you a member of?

I'm a member of the Connecticut Chapter where I get to share the love of flying with other female pilots in the nation's oldest female pilot organization. As the Connecticut Outreach Chair for Women in Aviation International (WAI), I'm able to plan events and connect with women from all parts of the aviation industry. In Sisters of the Skies (SOS), I started as a student pilot mentee, and once I became a commercial pilot, I was able to join as a

member. This organization connects Black female pilots, and my consistent participation helped earn me a \$7,500 scholarship toward my training. With the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) and the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP), I plan to participate in the various youth engagement events they have planned throughout this year. Most notably, I will be volunteering as a pilot in the EAA's All-Girl Young Eagles Female Pilot Rally.

How do you feel about this upcoming volunteer experience?

I love aviation, so having the opportunity to be a role model and representation to these girls is a privilege. The previous Girls in Aviation Day that I attended even inspired my stepdaughter to become a pilot!

Do you have short-term and long-term aviation goals?

My short-term goal is to be an efficient, effective, and safe flight instructor. Being a great CFI who is trusted by my students, both during ground and flight instruction, is important to me. I transferred to a different ATP location, because I needed more support, and so I advocated for my own needs. It is my goal to create the best learning environment for my students to achieve their goals.

Originally, I wanted to return to Avelo because I love the company culture and that is where I developed my love for aviation. However, I'm open to other avenues as I expand my experience in the industry.

Do you have recreational aviation plans?

The \$100 burger is definitely on my bucket list! Flying my family is another, and owning a personal aircraft is something I'm considering for the future.

What advice would you give to Black aviation students?

1. Don't be afraid to request a new instructor. Advocate for what you need, and be ok conversing with other instructors to continue learning.
2. Be locked in on training, and immerse yourself in the environment.
3. Be present professionally with everything that you do.
4. Find people who are in the same stage as you to build community.
5. Whatever you put your mind to you can do; stay focused and it will get done. Believe in yourself and know it's going to happen.
6. Give back when you've reached your goals and be willing to help others at all stages. 

How Many Ways Can Someone Cheat Death in One Flight?

By Diane Earhart, *Master Pilot, CFII, Retired ATC, Greater St. Louis Chapter*

My private pilot candidate and I were on our way to Springfield, Illinois, about 100 miles north. We were feeling as calm as the wind, which required no wind-correction angle at all. Crossing a known point, I did a VOR check to be sure it was current for any future IFR flying. I followed predetermined checkpoints on my paper sectional while my student referred to ForeFlight, cross-checking each other. I was losing count how many times we had attempted to complete this check ride for him to earn his Private Pilot Certificate. After one notice of disapproval and several subsequent scheduled dates plagued by bad weather and broken airplanes, we were getting nowhere fast. But this December day was clear and calm. Springfield had been reporting cloud cover, but the forecast called for clearing before the day's mid-morning scheduled check ride. We reviewed some topics in flight, but my guy was ready.

About halfway to our destination, we started encountering clouds under us – scattered and not alarming. Approaching Springfield's Class C airspace, the controller who had been flight-following us said, "Advise Springfield's information Zulu."

I acknowledged and tuned in the ATIS on the No. 2 radio.

"Springfield Airport, information Zulu, one-four-five-zero Z. Weather: six hundred overcast, visibility two, mist ..."

What the actual heck? Six hundred overcast? I was IFR current, and the airplane was IFR certified, but I hadn't shot an actual approach to near-minimums in a long, long, lonnng time. I hadn't brought plates with me for an anticipated VFR flight. Plus, now I was the instructor, and I couldn't let my student know how alarmed I was. And I couldn't let myself hyperventilate – no matter how much I wanted to. I informed the controller I didn't have the approach plate on board and asked him to read me the information. I knew he was required to do so – having been a controller myself. At the same time, I texted my best CFII friend merely saying, "Six hundred over in SPI. Pray for me." The controller started reading headings and altitudes to me.

I always – always – have a steno notebook with a pen in the spiral in the airplane pocket next to my right calf. I pulled out the notebook, and the pen was missing! I reached across my student to the pilot pocket and grabbed a pen, which happened to be from my church. The inscription on the side read: "I can do all things through Christ

which strengtheneth me." I immediately felt calmness envelop me. As I wrote the approach instructions, my student pulled up the approach plate on ForeFlight. I reviewed the information, self-briefing the approach and the missed approach. I was ready. The marker beacons weren't working in the airplane, so I asked the controller to call the final approach fix.

We descended into the clouds. Without coordination between us, my student flew the airplane while I monitored what he was doing and handled the radio. When we were vectored to a final heading, I knew the next instruction would be a heading 30 degrees from our final heading. I told Zach as I pointed to the proper instrument, "Our next turn will be to heading 280. Keep this needle centered, just like following a VOR needle, and when I tell you, start descending and keep this needle centered." Here we go!

On a heading of 310, we should have been flying to the northwest. As the needle drifted left, we flew slightly more to the left. But with each correction we made, the controller advised that we were drifting farther south of course. This made no sense. With the needle left of center, we should have been north of course. The more we corrected, the farther off course we became. It wasn't long before the controller gave us missed-approach heading and altitude instructions with the expectation that we would be re-vectored to try the approach again. He also provided weather reports from Litchfield, approximately 50 miles away, and from St. Charles, Missouri – back near where we started – both reporting better weather. I was confident that all we had to do was get on the ground at Springfield and the weather would clear enough for the check ride to occur.

The second attempt at the ILS yielded the same results. What the heck was going on? The controller offered an ASR (approach surveillance radar) approach. I accepted it, adding that I hadn't done one in a while, but let's try it. I'm sure he was thinking I was just a dumb girl flying around without knowing what to do and that I was in more trouble than I actually was. The ASR yielded the same results. We couldn't hold a heading within the five degrees or less we were being vectored. (If you've never been inside a fluffy cloud, they're a lot bumpier than you'd think.) It was clear the controller was not feeling the love for us to try one more time to get into Springfield. I opted to go to Litchfield, texting the examiner to meet us there. Litchfield was reporting 1,700 scattered, so a VFR landing should have been

a piece of cake.

A new controller asked if we wanted to fly the RNAV (area navigation) approach at Litchfield. I replied that we didn't have the equipment in the airplane for that and were hoping for a visual approach. We were flying at 2,400 feet, and I reported that we were in and out of the tops of the clouds. She vectored us to the vicinity of the airport, but the clouds were thicker than reported.

I had the fuel gauge in sight out of the corner of my eye. It's on my side of the airplane, so I am often more aware of it than the pilot in the left seat. I was calculating our time aloft. After all the fiddling around trying to get to Springfield, I didn't want to be in a position where we must land at Litchfield, while leaving the option of returning home open. We needed a hole at least 4,000 feet wide to descend through, while at the same time, not meeting an airplane climbing through the same hole to get on top. And we needed the bases of the clouds to be no lower than reported, so we could end up 500 feet below them while looking for the airport. A leading cause of fatal accidents in aviation is CFIT – controlled flight into terrain. Not today. Not on my watch.

I told the controller we were going to try to descend through a hole, but if that didn't work, we'd climb back on top to stay with her. She said we were at the minimum vectoring altitude, so to descend we'd need to cancel IFR and proceed VFR. The instant my brain processed that information, my brain also concluded: That's not good. Making a calculated risk, I cancelled. My radio call was answered with, "Three Alpha Charlie, approach." I answered. Then, "Three Alpha Charlie, how do you hear approach?" I didn't have to think at all to know that lost radar contact plus lost radio contact equals emergency. That was the last thing I wanted approach control to think, as I continued to talk Zach through what we were doing.

As luck would have it, my phone was in the Airworthiness Certificate pocket, and I had the phone number for TRACON in my contacts. I called the number, which was answered quickly. I identified myself by N number and explained what we were doing. The supervisor thanked me and asked me to call back when we were on the ground.

We exited the hole under the clouds that were more overcast than scattered. A quick check with ForeFlight aligned us with a runway, and we landed without incident. We agreed Zach would take the plane to the fuel pump while I went inside the airport administration

building. I talked to TRACON, and I'm sure they thought they had had an emergency on their hands. Then I looked at the automated weather display for the airport. It was reporting 900 overcast. Too low for a visual flight for a check ride or a flight home. We

went home via my roommate's Volkswagen and the airplane waited on the ground for me to come back the next day. Zach received valuable instrument training. We didn't break anything, including rules, airplanes, or our own selves.

After a couple more check ride attempts with the airplane not cooperating, Zach became a certificated Private Pilot, in Springfield, just in time for Christmas and just before the retesting deadline.

Soloing 50 Years Ago vs. Today

By Yana Synytska, Long Island Chapter



As a student pilot, I'd been waiting for this moment for almost two years. I felt no fear, only excitement and a deep sense of certainty that I could do it: the first takeoff alone, flying the pattern by myself, and most importantly, landing the airplane on my own. If you've never experienced it, there are simply no words to fully explain that feeling.

I'm 41 years old, and I began my journey toward my Private Pilot Certificate in May 2024. It has not been easy – especially while working full-time and dedicating nearly every weekend to flight training. But that is what it takes to pursue a dream.

On February 15, 2026, I completed my first solo at Bridgeport/Sikorsky Airport (KBDR) in Bridgeport, Connecticut, flying a Piper Archer II. We flew there from our home, Republic Airport (KFRG) in Farmingdale, New York. My instructor, Jerroll Harewood, closed the door, and I taxied via Taxiway D to Runway 11. I felt a deep sense of responsibility – to myself and to him. I completed my before-takeoff checklist, and then I heard the words, “727AC, cleared for takeoff.” My heart was racing. I lined up. Full power. Airspeed alive. Engine gauges were green, 55 knots – rotate. And there I was – lifting into the sky with my own hands.

No one can truly prepare you for that moment. It's excitement. It's pride. It's a touch of fear – and a great deal of courage. There are moments up there when everything feels so vast: the sky, the responsibility, the dream. And then there is you, holding

it all within yourself. It feels like too many emotions for one heart to carry. But maybe that is exactly how dreams are meant to feel.

I completed three takeoffs and landings successfully. I taxied back to pick up my instructor, feeling incredibly brave and proud of myself.

Now, let's travel back 50 years and see how a solo flight felt then.

In February 1976, **Jill Hopfenmuller** (a member of The Ninety-Nines since 1980) soloed in a Cessna 150. She and her instructor departed from Republic Airport (KFRG) and flew to Francis S Gabreski Airport (KFOK) in Westhampton Beach, New York. It was winter – cold, with snow lining the runways. After landing, Jill taxied to the office, where her instructor told her it was time to solo.

She taxied out and performed her run-up, but something didn't sound quite right. Trusting her instincts, she returned. Looking back, she laughs at what her instructor must have thought, but he encouraged her to try again. This time, everything felt right. She took off, completed the pattern and landed safely.

It was a great day. She felt nervous, but she trusted her instructor and, most importantly, herself. Jill has always been attentive and intuitive, noticing even the smallest details, whether in an aircraft or in everyday life. She also felt a strong connection to the airplane, as she and her husband Steve were both training for their Single Engine Land Ratings at the time, dedicating their weekends to the journey. After her solo, she felt proud – but also understood that this was just one step in a much longer path.



And here is another beautiful and unforgettable story – from my mentor, **Patricia Ohlsson**, a member of The Ninety-Nines since 1976 and recipient of the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.

Her first solo took place on April 26, 1975, at Long Island Mac Arthur Airport (KISP)

in New York, New York. That morning, her instructor, Vinny Devino, flew with her and then casually suggested she take a lunch break. After lunch, he would solo her.

She returned, and as they taxied out, he told her to drop him off near the tower. She shut down the Grumman American Trainer, and he stepped out. She waited. And waited. And waited. Finally, she keyed the microphone and asked, “Is my instructor up there?” Laughter filled the frequency. The controller then instructed her to taxi to Runway 33R for departure. She hesitated and replied, “But I've been using Runway 33L – I've never been on 33R.” Kindly, the controller allowed her to depart from the familiar runway.

She flew two patterns. On the second landing, she lowered the nose wheel a bit too early and thought she had a flat tire. She informed the tower and taxied back. That third landing never happened that day – but the memory stayed with her forever. She still keeps the blouse her instructor cut after her solo – a tradition – and it still fits. A funny, human, and truly wonderful story.

But what unites all of us over these 50 years? Courage. The sky. Belief. Each of us trusted ourselves. Each of us stepped into something bigger than fear. Each of us felt something that not everyone in life gets to experience.

Republic Airport (KFRG) is still as busy today as it was decades ago. Runways 33L and 33R are still active. And the sky – just as before – remains limitless.

To anyone reading this today: dream. Live the life you deserve. Even when it's hard – keep going. These moments, these challenges, these leaps of faith – they are what make you feel truly alive. I know there are many incredible experiences ahead of me. But the feeling of my first solo, that will never be repeated. That day, as I walked home from the train station, I didn't feel the ground beneath my feet. I felt like I was still flying – lifted by my own wings.

I hope you enjoyed reading.

Africa Section Promotes the Value of Wellness-Based Partnerships

By Ivana Alvares-Marshall, Governor, African Section



African Section Governor Ivana Alvares-Marshall with His Excellency Amararam Gujar.

Spirit of Collaboration

African Section Governor **Ivana Alvares-Marshall** had an audience with the High Commissioner of India to Malawi, His Excellency Amararam Gujar.

They held a meaningful and productive discussion about opportunities to collaborate with the High Commission in promoting yoga, meditation, and Ayurveda in Malawi, with a shared focus on enhancing mental well-being across communities.

This initiative is also being advanced as part of the African Section's wider mental health program, aligning aviation and wellness to support resilience, emotional balance, and holistic health through the ME Programme (Mindfulness & Emotional Approaches), an evidence-informed framework backed by neuroscience. The program was designed by Ivana Alvares-Marshall as a forward-looking model to strengthen mental wellness within aviation communities and beyond.

The meeting reflected a strong spirit of international friendship and cooperation, highlighting the growing value of wellness-based partnerships that can positively impact lives across Malawi and the African region.

We are grateful to His Excellency Amararam Gujar for his encouragement, warm support, and commitment to this important initiative.



African Section members introduced their Mindfulness & Emotional Approaches Programme to Jacaranda School for Orphans and Kondanani Children's Village, sharing techniques to better handle the stresses of abandonment, death, and instability.

African Section 99s Inspiring Young Minds Through Mental Health Outreach

The African Section continues to make a meaningful impact across communities by visiting schools and promoting mental wellness through the innovative ME Programme (Mindfulness & Emotional Approaches). This neuroscience-backed initiative is designed to equip young people with practical tools for emotional resilience, sharper concentration, stress management, and healthier thinking patterns.

Recently, Jacaranda School for Orphans and Kondanani Children's Village had the privilege of participating in the program. These are communities caring for children who have faced significant hardship early in life. Many children supported by Jacaranda have lost one or both parents to AIDS, while Kondanani provides care for babies abandoned at birth as well as vulnerable children in need of safety and stability. Such experiences can deeply affect confidence, trust, concentration, and emotional development, making compassionate mental health support especially valuable.

On the first day, many learners appeared fatigued and struggled to focus their attention. However, by the second and third day, after practicing the techniques introduced through the programme, there was a visible shift. Students demonstrated increased energy, stronger concentration, and a more positive engagement with learning. Their enthusiasm in embracing the tools showed how quickly young minds can respond when given the right support.

Across the world, young people are facing growing pressures, academic stress, emotional challenges, social uncertainty, trauma and the distractions of an

increasingly fast-paced digital environment. Many students are expected to perform academically without ever being taught how to regulate emotions, manage anxiety, or build mental resilience.

The ME Programme addresses this gap by giving students practical life skills that can support them both inside and outside the classroom. When students learn how to calm the mind, improve focus, and understand emotions, they are better prepared to learn, make sound decisions, build confidence, and navigate life's challenges. These are skills that can shape stronger futures.

While the programme has powerful benefits for schools, its reach extends far beyond education. Mental wellness is equally vital in aviation, where performance, judgment, concentration, and emotional regulation are essential. The African Section is actively working with aviation organizations across Africa to raise awareness of mental health and develop supportive initiatives for the industry.

By connecting youth development with aviation wellness, the African Section is helping build healthier communities and safer skies for the future.

The African Section 99s believe mental health should be accessible, practical, and empowering for all. If you would like to assist, collaborate, or become part of this growing mental health movement in support of the African Section, we warmly invite you to get in touch.

We are incredibly thankful for the opportunity to offer this course to the students, empowering them not only for the classroom, but for life. 

Happy 107th Birthday!



Nancy Jane Miller Livingston Stratford aka "Attagirl"
World War II Air Transport Auxiliary Pilot
Charter member of the "Whirly Girls"
Lifetime member of the Ninety-Nines

Happy 107th Birthday to Nancy Miller Livingston Stratford!

Nancy Jane Miller Livingston Stratford is the very last surviving female pilot of the World War II Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), lovingly known as "Attagirl."

At just 23 years old, Nancy began her groundbreaking journey, ferrying over 900 hours in about 50 different military aircraft across wartime Britain. As space permitted, she wrote down several aircraft on her flight cap. Her courage and skill made her a standout among her peers, and she became a symbol of determination and pioneering spirit.

After the war, Nancy became only the fourth woman in the world licensed to fly helicopters in 1947. She co-founded Livingston Copters in Alaska, later gaining acclaim as an Alaskan aviation legend. Her love for the skies drove her to becoming a Lifetime member of The Ninety-Nines and a charter

member (no. 4) of the Whirly-Girls -- a testament to her pioneering legacy.

In 2011, Nancy shared her awe-inspiring adventures in her memoir, *Contact! Britain! A Woman Ferry Pilot's Story During WWII in England*, offering a vivid glimpse into her life behind the controls of iconic warbirds, including her beloved Spitfire.

As a female pilot among just 20 other female aviators at that time, Nancy's fearless spirit, her unwavering dedication to aviation, and her role as a true trailblazer -- breaking barriers, charting new courses, and inspiring generations remains still with us today.

Not a member of The Ninety-Nines, but want to be? Apply online at www.ninety-nines.org and find a chapter today!



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Cleared for Takeoff: Thyroid Disease and the FAA Medical

By Dr. Rachael Ferraro, Senior AME, Aviate Medical, Intermountain Chapter



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Overview

I frequently see thyroid disease in my clinic, and the majority of those cases are hypothyroidism. Most pilots are relieved to learn that a stable, well-treated thyroid condition is often compatible with flying. Still, thyroid disease is not a one-size-fits-all diagnosis from an FAA standpoint. Hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism can follow very different certification pathways, so it is worth discussing both sides: what the disease means medically, how it is diagnosed, and what the FAA needs to see before a pilot can be cleared for flight.

Understanding the Thyroid

The thyroid is a small gland in the neck that produces hormones that influence metabolism, energy, body temperature, heart rate, and many other body systems. Diagnosis usually begins with blood work, especially TSH and free T4, and sometimes T3. Antibody testing may help identify autoimmune thyroid disease, such as Graves' disease or Hashimoto's disease. Imaging, such as ultrasound, thyroid scan, or radioactive iodine uptake testing, may be used when the cause needs clarification.

Hyperthyroidism: An Overactive Thyroid

Hyperthyroidism means the thyroid is overactive and producing too much thyroid hormone. Pilots may notice weight loss despite increased appetite, a rapid or irregular heartbeat, tremor, heat intolerance, sweating, nervousness, irritability, difficulty sleeping, muscle weakness, frequent bowel movements, or an enlarged thyroid.

Common causes include Graves' disease, overactive thyroid nodules, thyroiditis, too much iodine, or taking too much thyroid hormone medication. Untreated hyperthyroidism matters aeromedically, since it can lead to irregular heart rhythms, blood clots, stroke, heart failure, Graves' eye disease, bone loss, and muscle problems.

Hypothyroidism: An Underactive Thyroid

Hypothyroidism is the opposite problem: the thyroid is underactive and does not make enough hormone. Symptoms may include fatigue, weight gain, cold intolerance, joint and muscle pain, dry skin, thinning hair, slowed heart rate, depression, or menstrual changes.

Hashimoto's disease, an autoimmune condition, is a common cause. Severe untreated hypothyroidism can affect cholesterol and, rarely, lead to myxedema coma, a life-threatening slowing of body functions.

FAA Process for Hyperthyroidism

The FAA pathway differs for hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism. On FAA.gov, hyperthyroidism is listed in the AME Guide endocrine table as requiring pertinent medical records, a current status report with medication names, dosages and side effects, and current thyroid function tests. For an initial case, the FAA disposition is "Initial Special Issuance — Requires FAA Decision."

After the FAA grants an Authorization for Special Issuance, future medical exams may be handled through AME Assisted Special Issuance, or AASI, if the pilot meets the authorization requirements.

The AME must defer if hypothyroidism develops, if thyroid studies suggest inadequate treatment, or if an associated illness such as dysrhythmia develops.

FAA CACI for Hypothyroidism

Hypothyroidism is often more straightforward. Primary hypothyroidism may qualify under CACI, which stands for Conditions AMEs Can Issue. This pathway allows AMEs to issue a medical certificate when the applicant meets the parameters of the specific CACI worksheet and is otherwise qualified. If the criteria are not met, the AME must defer the exam and send supporting documents to the FAA.

For hypothyroidism CACI, the FAA worksheet requires a current, detailed clinical progress note from the treating physician or specialist from a visit no more than 90 days before the AME exam. The treating physician must find the condition stable. The pilot must have none of the listed concerning symptoms: fatigue, mental status impairment, or symptoms related to the pulmonary, cardiac, or visual systems.

Acceptable medications include levothyroxine, porcine thyroid, liothyronine, or liotrix. TSH must be less than 10 within the last year; a TSH of 10 or higher must be deferred.

What Pilots Should Bring to the AME

For pilots, preparation makes all the difference. Bring recent thyroid labs, a current treating physician note, medication names and doses, side-effect information, and any related cardiac or eye evaluations if they were part of the condition.

Stable hypothyroidism may be certifiable at the AME visit under CACI. Hyperthyroidism usually requires FAA review first, but once controlled and authorized, future renewals may become much smoother.

Final Approach

The goal is not to hide thyroid disease; the goal is to show that it is diagnosed, treated, stable, and safe for flight. —

Disclaimer: This is general information and not medical advice. Always consult your AME or medical provider for personalized guidance.

Milestones



Mia Anderson
Instrument
Old Dominion



Maple Castellanos
Solo
—BC Coast



Christine Freeman
B737 Type
— Oksas



Miranda Keller
Air Transport Pilot
— Orange County



Casey Raymond
CFII
— Katahdin Wings



Kiegham Broney
Seaplane
— British Columbia Coast

Bridgett Cornett
Seaplane
— Wisconsin

Andrada Costoiu
Private
— Orange County

Celine Cote
Solo
— Orange County



Lauren Gallagher
Solo
— Wisconsin

Paige Kuhn
CFI
— Wisconsin



Joan Li
Private
— Santa Clara Valley



Stella Reenan
Private
— Orange County



McKenzie Callahan
Commercial
Multi-Engine
— Orange County



Giovanna Eiler
Instrument
— San Diego

Sanjal Gavande
PhD in Systems Engineering
— Orange County

HalliAnn Glover
Solo
— Arkansas

Mina Gu
Tailwheel Endorsement
— Bay Cities



Natalie Moncaleano
Instrument
— All-Ohio



Rebecca Rich
Private
— Santa Clara Valley

Maya Cardenas-Berkowitz
Commercial
— Bay Cities



Jessica Carrera
Private
— Orange County



Hailey Fairless
CFI
— Memphis

Kim Fanelli
High-performance
Endorsement
— Michigan



Alli Hinmon
Commercial
Multi-Engine; Multi-Engine Instructor
— Orange County



Mandi Neumann
ATP Captain
— Wisconsin

Randi Olsen
Multi-engine
— Bay Cities

Stacy Pritts
CFI
— Pikes Peak



Brooklyn Kochert
Solo
— All-Ohio



Diya Sagar
Commercial
— British Columbia Coast



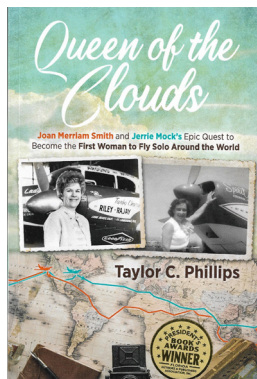
Sarah Smith
Instrument
— All-Ohio Chapter



Gabby Cassettari
Multi-engine
Instrument
— Oklahoma



Sal Valdes
CFI
— Santa Clara Valley



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Michigan Chapter Book Club)

QUEEN OF THE CLOUDS

Joan Merriam Smith and Jerrie Mock's Epic Quest to Become the First Woman to Fly Solo Around the World

Author: Taylor C Phillips

Phillips tells an absolutely fabulous story and we should all know more about it. Two accomplished female pilots. Two different types of aircraft. Two different plans. But one goal: to become the first woman to fly solo around the world.

This book was brought to my attention by the Michigan Chapter and its book club. This is part of the email I received from Linda Langrill, Chapter Chair:

"Our Michigan Chapter of The Ninety-Nines has had an active Book Club since 2020. Every other month, we select a book to read and discuss at our monthly chapter meeting.

Four years ago, we selected Jerrie Mock's newly re-released book, *Three-Eight Charlie*. It was a popular choice, and for many of our chapter members, it was their first introduction to Jerrie. In late 2024, the book *Queen of the Clouds: Joan Merriam Smith and Jerrie Mock's Epic Quest to Become the First Woman to Fly Solo Around the World*, by Taylor Phillips, was suggested by one of our members. We voted to read the book and scheduled it for discussion at our April 1, 2025, meeting.

We invited the author, Taylor Phillips, to join us at that discussion meeting, which he did. He provided the background for how he came to research and write this book. It was fascinating! We began to appreciate Taylor's nickname, 'Collector of Stories.' He had almost unlimited access to personally interview Jerrie Mock, primarily because she trusted that he would not change her story to make it more glamorous or use it as a path to creating a screenplay (although perhaps that is what should happen at this point in time).

For me, personally, it was the telling of the other side of the story, the other woman, if you will, who was committed to the same goal that Jerrie was: To be the first woman to fly solo around the world. They did not know initially that they had taken off within a few days of each other. But they had very different views of how and what they wanted to accomplish along the way.

Taylor also addresses the question of why Jerrie and Joan didn't become famous for their accomplishment in 1964. There were some strange twists that were revealed towards the end of the book, including the fact that Joan and Jerrie were required to pay back their sponsors after their flight was completed.

I have had wonderful email communication with Mr. Phillips, and I echo what the Michigan Chapter thought. This book is well worth your time, and it will definitely open a chapter in our history that I'll bet you know nothing about. It's a definite read."

WHY FLY

Seeking Awe, Healing, and Our True Selves in the Sky

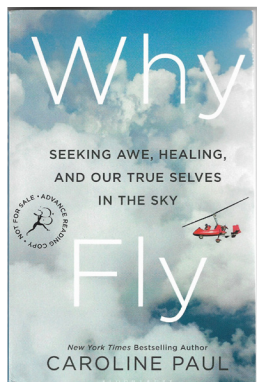
Author: Caroline Paul

There have been a number of recently published books centered around flight and emotional healing. I've found that some of the metaphors used in some of the books elicit a gag response from me. This isn't one of those books.

It has an interesting arrangement. There are seven parts including: Earth or Sky, Preflight, Taxi, Takeoff, Flight (Outbound), Flight (Inbound), and Landing. Quoting her publicity manager, "Alongside her own experiences over decades of flight, *Why Fly* explores the history, art, and science of aeronautics and the deep impact of flying on others."

I liked Paul's writing style, her honesty and her willingness to bring in many experiences other than her own. Keep an open mind. This is a very different take on the genre of self-help. If you've stayed away from this realm, this might be the book that will change your mind.

This is a book that should definitely be in your library. Plus, I absolutely love her photo on the second page of the book!



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audiobook



Top: The African Section and pilot attendees of the Aviation Africa Summit & Exhibition with President of Rwanda His Excellency Paul Kagame (center). | Bottom left: Future aviators under the A330-200 Airbus with Dina Dawod, African Section Vice Governor, center. | The African Section and future aviators experience sitting in a helicopter.

AFRICAN SECTION

Aviation Africa Summit & Exhibition

The African Section 99s were proud to participate in the prestigious Aviation Africa Summit & Exhibition, strengthening partnerships across the continent and advancing opportunities for the next generation of aviation professionals.

As part of the conference, the African Section organized a special pre-event Youth Day Programme in collaboration with key industry partners, including Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority, RwandAir, Akagera Aviation Ltd., Airbus, GroundTime, and the Aviation Africa Summit team.

Together, this collaboration created an unforgettable experience for 50 bright young girls, many of whom received their very first real insight into the world of aviation. From touring the airport and stepping onboard aircraft to engaging directly with CEOs, engineers, female pilots, and aviation leaders, the students were introduced to the vast range of careers and possibilities available within the industry.

Their excitement, intelligent questions, and determination inspired everyone involved. The programme demonstrated how exposure, mentorship, and opportunity can transform aspirations into achievable goals. For many of the girls, aviation shifted from being something distant in the sky to something tangible and within reach.

A true highlight of the event was the support of His Excellency Paul Kagame, who met the girls and joined them for a group photograph. It was a powerful moment that reflected Rwanda's commitment to youth empowerment, education, and gender equality within aviation and beyond.

The African Section extend heartfelt thanks to all partners, speakers, volunteers, and supporters who gave their time and expertise to inspire the next generation. Special appreciation goes to the female pilots of RwandAir Ltd., whose mentorship and encouragement left a lasting impression on the participants. Their presence showed the girls that women belong in every cockpit, boardroom, engineering hangar, and leadership position across aviation.

This program proved that when organizations unite with a shared purpose, extraordinary things happen. Together, we can unlock opportunities, ignite dreams, and empower Africa's future aviators.

The African Section is already gearing up for Aviation AFRICA 2026, where even greater opportunities await. If you are interested in supporting our mission, partnering with us, or joining future youth programs, we warmly invite you to contact the African Section for more details.

"The girls were not just shown aeroplanes, they were shown that dreaming the impossible is possible!"

– Ivana Alvares-Marshall

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter elected a new slate of officers for the next two years from July 2026 to June 2028. Our new officers include: Sarah Haskett, Chapter Chair; Deborah Howell, Vice Chair; Megan Gorak, Secretary; Rachel Lindvig, Treasurer.

Chapter Chair Linda Langrill served as our Chair for the last four years and will become our Immediate Past Chair. We inducted our new officers at our Annual Meeting held on June 20, 2026, at Oscoda/Wurtsmith Airport (KOSC) located in Oscoda Township, Michigan. Following the business meeting, members enjoyed lunch, then toured the Wurtsmith Air Museum. The Museum's collection features a Women in Aviation display that includes historical documents donated by the Michigan Chapter in the 1990s.

The Michigan Chapter volunteered at the Harriet Quimby Fly-In on April 25, 2026, at Southwestern Michigan Regional Airport (KBEH). The event honored Michigan native Harriet Quimby, America's first female licensed pilot, and featured talks given by local accomplished women pilots as well as free airplane rides, food trucks, and static displays on the airport ramp. Michigan Chapter members Linda Langrill, Sarah Haskett, Frances Rose, and Berfin Kayikcioglu answered questions about The Ninety-Nines and raised over \$40 by selling aviation items. Frances Rose, in the spirit of the event, donned a plum-colored flight suit made famous by Harriet Quimby and sewn by Michigan Chapter late member Nancy Walters. Harriet was the spokesperson for Vin Fiz grape soda and was depicted on a commemorative U.S. postal stamp issued in 1991.

We held meetings via Zoom in April and May. In April, Chapter Scholarship Chair and Webmaster Cherry Kan moderated a discussion on the topic of "Recognizing People Who Have Supported My Aviation Goals." Members shared their personal journey and stories of those who mentored and continue to inspire them to reach their aviation goals. The Michigan Chapter formed a task force to review and update our bylaws. Linda Langrill, Sarah Haskett, and Megan Gorak volunteered to serve on the Bylaws Review Task Force.

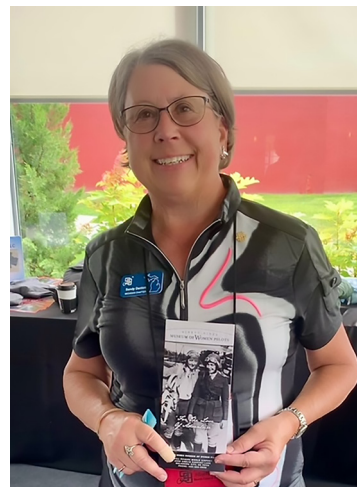
During our May meeting, the chapter made the decision to offer funds to a member who has never attended a section meeting and would be attending the Fall North Central Section to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana. The funds were made available from contributions given in memory of former Chapter Chair, Sandy Denton, who died in a tragic airplane accident in April 2023. It was Sandy's wish that more chapter members would attend North Central Section meetings.

Our chapter partnered with the Michigan Chapter of the Women in Aviation International to honor the service of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) over Memorial Day weekend by visiting gravesites of WASP members buried in Michigan cemeteries. Volunteers placed tributes at WASP gravesites to honor them for their contributions during WWII. Michigan Chapter volunteers included: Samantha Inguanzo, Linda Langrill, Sarah Drevon, Julie Diehl, Susan Siporin, Cherry Kan, Claire Dunnigan, Megan Hamilton, Frances Rose, Barb Vukits, and Marissa Marshall. Sarah Pagano, Friend of The 99s, also assisted in the effort.

We recognized the following members who were awarded the Michigan 99s Sandy Denton Trophy: Kim Fanelli, High Performance Endorsement; Linda Langrill, Two Terms (four years) as Michigan Chapter Chair.

We welcomed seven new members: Lily McNaughton, Anya Hassen, Lynzi Evans, Morgan Sokolowski, Maci Krzciuk, Mallory Walker, Brooke Green.

– Barb Vukits



Former Michigan Chapter Chair **Sandy Denton** (2018–2022) continues to inspire Michigan Ninety-Nines members through a legacy of encouragement, achievement, and service. To honor Sandy's memory, the Michigan Chapter established the Michigan 99s Denton Traveling Trophy, which is awarded each month to members who achieve significant aviation milestones.

Memorial contributions made in Sandy's honor have also enabled the chapter to sponsor her induction into the Forest of Friendship this fall. Remaining funds from the memorial have been designated to support another of Sandy's longtime goals – encouraging members to broaden their Ninety-Nines experience. A scholarship will be awarded to help a Michigan Chapter member attend her first North Central Section Meeting this fall in Indianapolis, assisting with registration, lodging, and travel expenses.

Through these initiatives, Sandy's commitment to supporting and inspiring women in aviation continues to make a difference for future generations of Michigan Ninety-Nines.

– Linda Langrill



Left: Member Frances Rose wore a recreation of Harriet's distinctive purple flying suit. Above: Michigan Chapter members gathered to celebrate Michigan native pioneer woman pilot Harriet Quimby.



Right (top & bottom): Michigan Chapter members along with Michigan Chapter Women in Aviation International visited the graves of Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) over the Memorial Day weekend.





ALL-OHIO CHAPTER

All-Ohio Chapter hosted the Spring North Central Section Meeting at Sporty's Pilot Shop in Batavia, Ohio, and had a record turnout of 105 guests. Here is a photo of half of the guests. There were too many for one photo.

– Margaret Hazlett



Australian Section Annual Meeting, The Northerlies, Airlie Beach, QLD, May 7, 2026, Sue Burdekin, Kerry Nolan, Tessa Beyersdorff, Cathy Hobson, Judy Shaw, Jenny Gust, Dee Bond (New Zealand), Jackie Milroy, Noor Braybrook, Dominique Estival, Jennifer Graham, Carolyn Hinchcliffe. Come and meet us all in Sydney at the International Conference in September 2027!

THE AUSTRALIAN SECTION

The Australian Section held its Annual Meeting on May 7, 2026, during the Annual Conference of the Australian Women Pilots Association at Airlie Beach, Queensland. Fourteen members were able to attend, a number of whom had flown themselves from various locations around Australia. Governor Dominique Estival flew from Bathurst, New South Wales, in a Piper Arrow; Jennifer Graham flew her Bonanza from Victoria.

The main topic of discussion was the preparation for the 2027 International Conference in Sydney (September 9-12, 2027). With the venue organized, we are now lining up sponsors, guest speakers, and excursions for an unforgettable few days in the most beautiful location.

– Dominique Estival

Grass Roots



Members of the Greater New York Chapter Shannon Osborne and Bev Weintraub. Middle, seated: Kate Galvin. Standing: Kimberley Hortopan.

THE NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY SECTION

The New York-New Jersey Section received \$500 towards our Section Scholarship from Afficionado Coffee for sales of the Aileron Blend!

Greater New York Chapter member Kelly Donovan reported that her wife, Keri, got the job at Afficionado in 2024 as their Head of Education and Social Programs. When she was hired, she recognized that the coffee blend they use called “Aileron” was an aviation term and found out that one of the owners had pursued some flight training with an interest in aviation. From there, they both talked about a potential collaboration, and it came down to waiting for good timing – March, Women’s Month – to make the proposal of a collaboration. Keri has been able to spend the last year pitching ideas like this one to her team and was really thrilled to make the connection here. They offered to donate 10% of proceeds in the month of March from their Aileron blend of coffee to The Ninety Nines.

Kelly says Keri’s advice for potential partnerships is to keep yapping about airplanes, because you never know who is listening, and to keep talking to new people! As pilots we’re all quite attuned to aviation-themed anything popping up in our lives, so keep a look out for potential collaborations.



Top: Montana Chapter enjoyed their time painting the airport name, identifier, and CTAF at Lincoln Airport. | Bottom: Charity Fechter, Amelia Earhart Scholarship Chair; Missy Harlow; Emma Fuchs, Chapter Vice Chair; Kelli Weed, Chapter Chair; guest Annie Waltersheid; Megan Bleck, Chapter Treasurer; and Janine Schwahn, Airmarking Chair.

MONTANA CHAPTER

The Montana Chapter of The Ninety-Nines gathered on May 9, 2026, at Lincoln Airport (S69) for a group airmarking project. Members enjoyed spending time together on the tarmac while supporting this important aviation visibility and safety effort.

– Alexandra Y. Calloway-Nation



HAMPTON ROADS CHAPTER

Hampton Roads Chapter celebrated its 50th anniversary recently with a luncheon that included former members and some we haven’t seen in quite a while. Several brought memorabilia, including pictures and newspaper clippings of our past activities. We compared memories of our projects and former members. Thanks to Linda Bangert and Connie Jones who organized the very enjoyable event. Our next big anniversary will surely include our mascot and future 99, Faith Oxley, shown in the front row of the accompanying photo. We have no doubt that she will have earned her wings by that time!

– Linda Mathias

OLD DOMINION 99S AT HORSE FEATHERS AIRPORT

The cast of the new musical *FLY* was invited to an event at Horse Feathers Airport (53VA) on May 2, 2026. The idea was to give the cast, who are students at Southern Virginia University, a first flight experience and a historical perspective of what it was like to fly in 1929.

The fly-in event was hosted by Chuck Tippet, owner of Horse Feathers Airport, as a fundraiser for the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society (VAHS). Many people flew into the grass strip in the Virginia countryside near Warrenton. There were tethered hot air balloons rides early in the day. There were food trucks, a band, and lots of aviation camaraderie.

Avery Brinton, who played Bobbi Trout in the musical, flew her first flight in the WACO with Chuck Tippet, a pilot with The Flying Circus Airshow. Chuck also presented Avery with a white aviator scarf typical of the times.

As a bonus, RJ McGlasson flew with Joe Bender in the Stearman. Joe is also a pilot with The Flying Circus. RJ was overjoyed to be in the air again.

Both Chuck and Joe are pilots and wingwalkers for The Flying Circus. They both are also certified pilots for wingwalkers. There are very few wingwalkers in the world, and these dual-role pilots are extremely rare. The Flying Circus Airshow opened their season on May 17.

Laura Savino donated her books, *Jet Boss*, and signed them for attendees. Proceeds went to VAHS.

It was a fabulous day to share aviation with the next generation. Since it was finals week for the students and some students had already gone home, the rest of the cast will have another opportunity this September to fly in vintage aircraft at Horse Feathers Airport.

– Susan Passmore



Top: Old Dominion 99s at the Horse Feathers Airport Fly-in. Melissa Plumer, Sue Passmore, Laura Savino, Avery Brinton, Cynthia Axell, dog Piper, Nancy Schuster, Gail Keys (missing RJ McGlasson). | Bottom: Avery Brinton, who portrays Bobbi Trout in the musical *FLY*, smiles after her flight with Chuck Tippet in the WACO. (Photo by Laura Savino)



NORTHEAST KANSAS CHAPTER

The City of Lawrence, Kansas (owner of the Lawrence Regional Airport, KLWC) recently completed a compass rose project on the newly resurfaced tarmac. Members of the Lawrence Pilots Association, our Northeast Kansas 99s chapter, other 99s, City staff, and staff of Hetrick Air Services all participated in the painting the first weekend of May.

– Sara Thompson

Grass Roots



Top: Pikes Peak Chapter members and Companion Course volunteers from left to right: Melissa Kurrle, Annika York, Zoan Harclerode, Cassia Batts, Katie Palmer, Sarah Nguyen, and Stacy Pritts. | Bottom left: Member Zoan Harclerode (squatting, back to camera) demonstrating pre-flight with the Companions on her own airplane. | Bottom right: Pikes Peak Chapter member Annika York (far right in her own airplane), showing how the controls and surfaces are related, while member Katie Palmer (second from L) looks on.

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER

Flying Companion Course

The Pikes Peak Chapter hosted a Flying Companions Course on April 4, 2026, welcoming 11 non-pilot passengers for a full day of confidence-building and hands-on aviation learning. The course was held in the Meadow Lake Airport Association (MLAA) Hangar at KFLY in Peyton, Colorado, and was designed to demystify the cockpit and empower frequent right-seat flyers.

The course equipped each Companion with the knowledge to support their pilots and feel more at ease in the air. Chapter volunteers Katie Palmer (Chairman), Melissa Kurrle (Secretary), Stacy Pritts (Social Media Chair), Sarah Nguyen (Publicity Chair), Zoan Harclerode (Treasurer), Cassia Batts (Membership Chair), and Annika York (Vice Chairman) introduced participants to the fundamentals of weather, aerodynamics, preflight, physiology, charts and navigation, radios and safety equipment, and how to get help.

The highlight of the day occurred late morning when Zoan and Annika taxied their own aircraft onto the ramp for an outdoor hands-on session. With clear spring skies and general aviation traffic performing touch-and-gos on Runway 15, participants were given the opportunity to conduct preflight, explore control surfaces, and observe firsthand how windsocks, crosswinds, and aerodynamic forces play out in real time. The chapter extends heartfelt thanks to Zoan and Annika for generously sharing their aircraft and expertise.

The event also carried a meaningful impact beyond the classroom: attendees contributed just over \$1,000 toward future Pikes Peak Chapter scholarships. The Chapter also gratefully acknowledges Wayfinder Coffee, Krispy Kreme Donuts, Jimmy John's (Falcon location), and Costco for providing coffee, donuts, lunch, and snacks, as well as the MLAA for allowing us to use their facilities and projection equipment.

With new skills, new confidence, and a deeper appreciation for the world of general aviation, the Flying Companions left the course ready to be stronger partners in the cockpit!

– Sarah Nguyen



Our newest Life Members

Sue Ballew
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Jeri Barrientos
Oklahoma Chapter

Teresa Camp
Oklahoma Chapter

Glenda Cardona
Ventura County Chapter

Jessica Citrin
Member At Large

Margot Eld
Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter

Donna Hanebut
Mid-Columbia Chapter

Linda Langrill
Michigan Chapter

Cynthia Madsen
Chicago Area Chapter

Kelli O'Donnell
Florida Suncoast Chapter

Martha Schriener
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Jennifer Sumner
Greater Seattle Chapter



Our most recently enlisted Friends of The 99s

Joshua Boshears
Clinton, TN

Keita-Gabriella Caldwell
Columbus, OH

Debbie Cannady
Millington, TN

Alexander Dunstan
Warner Springs, CA

Brittany Fool
Millington, TN

Kunal Singh Gour
West Park, FL

Amber Kemmerling
Redmond, WA

Alycia King
Knoxville, TN

Chris King
Las Vegas, NV

Jeremy Loubaton
Boynton Beach, FL

Ponnarasi Raj
Philadelphia, PA

Carolyn Scornavacca
Pembroke Pines, FL

Mark Shaw
Santa Clara, CA

Kayla Taylor
Sarasota, FL

Matthew Tidball
San Diego, CA



New Horizons

This space is dedicated to our members and 49½s who have passed on to New Horizons. We will miss them, and thank these 99s for all of their contributions to our organization.

Lucy Fleming
British Columbia Coast Chapter
March 30, 2026

Margaret Mead
Santa Barbara Chapter
April 30, 2026

Margaret-Anne Thomas
Australian Section
May 1, 2026

Judy Phelps
Ventura County Chapter
May 20, 2026

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