



# WAI SCHOLARSHIPS CHANGE LIVES



# WOMEN IN AVIATION INTERNATIONAL





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# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY WAI SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*Celebrating \$10 Million of Fulfilling Hopes, Dreams and Type-Ratings*

The Women in Aviation scholarship program was launched in 1995 as the brainchild of WAI's founding board members, who wanted to help young women achieve that next big milestone in their careers. One lucky WAI member received a \$500 scholarship that first year, but seeds for the future were being planted and nurtured.

In 1996, Northwest Airlines awarded the first of many flight type-ratings, increasing the scholarship pool to \$50,000. The first type rating was for the winner's choice and went to a graduate student at Middle Tennessee State University. Not bashful, Jodi Osborne chose the 747 type rating. When her name was announced at the luncheon, she leapt out of her seat in the back of the room and bounced and squealed her way up to the stage like Tigger. She scrambled up the stairs and gave a bear hug to the vice president from Northwest who was presenting the award. The audience rose to their feet, sharing in her exuberance with a rousing ovation. Two other members received scholarships that night, and the seeds of a successful program were sown.

Over the next five years, WAI's scholarship program experienced meteoric growth, capped by 2001's stunning tally of 106 scholarship awards worth over \$900,000. Despite two recessions over the course of the 2000s, support for the scholarship program remained strong, with an average of 60 members each year receiving scholarships valued at nearly half a million dollars.

The current decade has seen the program move into a higher level of donor commitment and member opportunity. At least 77 scholarships have been awarded annually over the past six years, with the annual scholarship pool averaging nearly \$600,000. The program awarded its 1,000th scholarship in 2013. This year, the WAI offices were filled with more than

1,200 applications for a record 113 scholarships. When these scholarships are awarded in March 2016, WAI will celebrate the program for passing the \$10 million mark in scholarships since its inception.

**by Cassandra Bosco**

The program's rapid growth during its first few years was driven by the airlines, who were facing a pilot shortage, with each year's awards ceremonies featuring an increasing number of airlines offering more type ratings, usually specifying the type rating to be awarded. During these formative years when the airlines were hiring, scholarship winners were likely to be offered jobs upon successful completion of the type rating. In 1999, 13 type ratings plus four job offers and nine interviews were awarded. In 2001, when the aviation economy was at its peak, 41 type rating scholarships were awarded, many with follow-on job offers.

As the flight scholarships grew, so did the management, maintenance, engineering, and aircraft dispatcher awards as well as various other scholarships. Founding board member Mary Ann Eiff, who served as the first chair of the scholarship committee, spent all of her time at the conferences encouraging the vendors for more and varied scholarships, and it paid off well for everyone. The vendors were able to read résumés and identify potential employees, the winners were allowed to visit companies and sometimes spend internships with them. For everyone, this was a wonderful opportunity to network with people in their chosen aviation career field. The

young people were able to achieve that next big step in their aviation career, and the award sponsors were able to identify new aviation people who were vibrant, excited, and wanted to excel in their chosen field.



## HISTORY OF WAI SCHOLARSHIPS

**D**uring the program's first 10 full years, 477 individuals received more than \$4 million in scholarship money—an average of \$8,556. In 2005, the value of the scholarships awarded ranged from \$500 to over \$30,000. A total of



680 people applied for scholarships, with individual awards drawing as many as 137 applicants. There were also applications received for internships offered by ASTAR, Airbus, Southwest Airlines, and Boeing.

"I was very proud to have been the original Mother of Scholarships for Women in Aviation, and because of many volunteers who greatly helped me along the way, we were able to read, sort and separate *each* scholarship application and send it to the proper readers for evaluation," Mary Ann said. "As an example, we received many applications for a type rating including some applicants who did not yet hold a private pilot certificate. In those cases, we were able to redirect their application to a private pilot scholarship so that at least they had a chance to achieve their next step in the pursuit of an aviation career.

"Many college students also helped me at the conferences by contacting the vendors and winners to ensure they would be on stage at the correct time and place to award or receive their scholarship. In the early years, we enjoyed the element of surprise when making the awards," Mary Ann said. "I would make hints about 'don't miss the early morning session tomorrow' or 'come sit in front with me tomorrow at 9 a.m.'"

Some scholarships focus on applicants with exceptional financial needs. WAI reads every application, to help identify the most need worthy applicants and award them a financial boost towards their aviation career, and also makes sure these recipients are able to fully participate in the awards celebration. "Many years, when the winner of a scholarship was unable to attend without financial help I was able to find

someone to sponsor them, share their room, or help in other ways, like transportation," Mary Ann said. Nowadays, companies and individuals formally sponsor travel scholarships to help cover registration fees, hotel room nights, and airfare for scholarship recipients with a financial need, making it possible for them to attend the conference to receive their award personally. "It was my honor to be the first scholarship chair and a very rewarding volunteer position for the 10 years I did the scholarships," Mary Ann said. "As the scholarship program rapidly grew in size, it was more than one person with a team of helpers was able to accomplish and it was time to institutionalize the program into the fabric of Women in Aviation International."

It's not only the recipients who reap the rewards of the scholarship program. Our sponsoring companies tell us they are proud to participate. Many hear back from their scholarship winners with news of their successes in the industry. It's a wonderful opportunity to help grow the next generation of aviation leaders.

"Women in Aviation International does an outstanding job promoting aviation as a passion and potential career choice for women," said Martha King, co-chairman of King Schools and new 2016 scholarship sponsor. "Since John and I started King Schools, we have been proponents and supporters of women choosing to pursue the dream of flying. CFIs are in a position to make a dramatic impact on the quality of the next generation of aviators. Offering a scholarship to help a female CFI further her career, and have access to the full set

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of King aviation courses for life, just seemed like a natural to both of us.”

Scholarship recipients also give back to the program that helped launch their careers or funded their next steps forward. In 1998, Lisa Anderson Spencer was the recipient of the Airbus International Leadership Scholarship. Her perspective and what she has done since then make her an exceptional role model.

**Lisa became the first WAI scholarship winner to offer scholarships back to the organization a few years later; she generously sponsored three scholarships to offer recognition and validation of the career path made by other women.**

After earning a private pilot certificate and completing a master’s degree, Lisa joined WAI to meet other women in her chosen profession. She applied for the only scholarship offered that didn’t restrict applicants by age, aspiration, or student requirements. The evening of the awards dinner, she

didn’t know that she had won the scholarship and still remembers what it felt like to hear her name announced. “I remember hearing the name called and, initially, looked around to see if there was someone else with my name,” Lisa said. “Once I realized it was me, I stood and heard applause. To me, this applause provided the validation for the choices and decisions that I had made which led me to this moment.

Reading, writing, studying, and working can be isolating, so this type of recognition and encouragement was an awakening, of sorts. Being handed an award for leadership helped me realize that working with passion and faith can be isolating, but placing focus on others and sharing your vision, trust can be established and demonstrated which is the ultimate goal of every leader. It doesn’t get much better than that!”

That’s not where the story ends. Lisa became the first WAI scholarship winner to offer scholarships back to the organization a few years later; she generously sponsored three scholarships to offer recognition and validation of the career path made by other women. These three scholarships filled the void that she had experienced 1) women over 30 making a career change, 2) women going into aviation business, and 3) women in aviation maintenance.

Lisa knew that by returning the generosity and paying forward, a platform is provided to allow others to share their hopes and dreams to their peers. Lisa still keeps in touch with



one of the recipients of her scholarship, who is now a captain for an airline; as well as many other aviation professionals with whom she still calls friends and collaborators.

WAI staffer Donna Wallace, who now manages the scholarship program, notes that, “Each year is new and exciting working with the scholarship sponsors and receiving the many applications from all over the world. Reading their essays, filled with enthusiasm and hope of furthering their aviation education, is only a part of it all. Hearing their voices when you call to tell them they were selected as a winner or the thank you cards and e-mails that are written and sent is very fulfilling. I am proud to work for such an organization that is supported by its many sponsors willing to help others fulfill their dreams!”

With the evolution and growth of this program over the last 20 years, we are confident WAI scholarships will continue to make a positive impact on the aviation and aerospace industry for generations to come.



Women in Aviation International  
scholarship winners are changing the world  
for the better every day,  
taking steps to reach their full potential and  
contribute to the aviation industry  
in meaningful ways.

We are proud of our rich  
scholarship history and the  
impact the WAI scholarship program  
has had on the lives and careers  
of thousands of incredible women.

Here are just a few  
of their amazing stories:



# BRENDA ALARCON

WAI 29299

San Jose, California

Dare to Dream Scholarship (2014)



BRENDA ALARCON

I have been a member of WAI since 2006 and joined knowing of the scholarship opportunities that were part of the benefits of membership. I became inspired to pursue a career in aviation when I was still in high school. It was my senior year that I joined a summer program that introduced students to the aviation industry. This is when I met my first female pilot. That was more than enough for me to be inspired to become a pilot myself.

Ultimately I graduated from San Jose State University with a degree in aviation operations and a minor in business. Soon after graduating, I obtained my private pilot certificate, and thanks to WAI, my instrument rating. I had hoped to be flying professionally by now, but unfortunately bills have always gotten in the way. I am still going to pursue flying as a career; it is just going at a slower pace than I had planned. I currently have a great job working in the aviation industry for NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) as a report-processing specialist.

Receiving the Dare to Dream scholarship allowed me to finish my instrument rating. With all of the bills and school loans I have to pay, there is a limited amount of income that I can use toward flight training. Without the scholarship funds, I might have still been working on the instrument rating months later!

Obtaining my instrument rating has been so beneficial in so many ways, but most importantly, it has gotten me one step closer to my dream of flying professionally. I also use instrument skills in my current position with ASRS. I am forever grateful to have earned a WAI scholarship!



# MICHELLE BASSANESI

WAI 8195

Rome, Italy

Airbus Leadership Grant (2011)

Universal Weather & Aviation FAA-Certified Dispatcher Training Scholarship (2014)



MICHELLE BASSANESI

I am all in for celebrations! My motto is "Impossible is only a steppingstone to success," which is all about celebrating each step of the way.

My dream is to fly jets around the world as well as to be an aviation executive.

Through WAI I have received two scholarships: the Airbus Leadership Award in 2011, in recognition of my exceptional achievements to date, my uncommon determination in pursuing my goals, and my potential to become an outstanding leader; and the Universal Weather & Aviation FAA-Certified Dispatcher Training Scholarship in 2014.

Aviation is my passion and my next career. I am a third-generation entrepreneur, an FAA and EASA certificated commercial multi- and single-engine pilot, an FAA- and EASA-certificated instructor with instrument privileges, mentoring coordinator for the Ninety-Nines Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative, and an FAA-certified aircraft dispatcher. In January 2016 I will take my FAA ATP single-engine checkride, and I expect to graduate from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in the spring of 2017 with a major in aeronautics and minors in aviation safety and management.

I am currently in the process of expanding my leadership competencies by becoming a coach, as well as improving my negotiation and conflict management skills. My dream is to fly jets around the world as well as to be an aviation executive. In the meantime, I am enjoying the ride and inspiring others to follow and achieve their dreams.





# LINDA BEANS

WAI 17359

Parker, Colorado

Delta Air Lines Boeing B-737-800 Type Rating (2013)



LINDA BEANS

From the time I was little I wanted to be an airline pilot. As I got older, I started learning how to fly and did everything I could to learn as much as I could and gain a variety of experience. I think I just about did it all: I instructed, flew corporate, flew sky divers, flew seaplanes, and was a bush pilot, a regional airline pilot, and even an aircraft mechanic. Through all of this, I always kept the end goal in sight of someday being a major airline pilot.

In 2013 I was incredibly blessed and honored to receive the Delta Air Lines Boeing 737 Type Rating Scholarship. It was an amazing opportunity to spend five weeks at the Delta training facility, going through Delta's program. I met many wonderful people, and the experience affirmed my hunch that Delta would be a great airline to work for, which was my ultimate goal. During this time I was a first officer at Horizon Air, flying the Dash 8-400, and there was not much movement

at the major airlines. I applied for the scholarship not only for the learning opportunity, but also looking for something to set myself apart when they started hiring. It was through this scholarship, proving myself through the training and making contacts during my training, that when Delta Air Lines started interviewing later in 2013, I was granted an interview and offered a job. Now I am a first officer for Delta flying the Boeing 717 out of LAX.

When applying for the scholarship I only thought about what it would do for my career, and now realize there is so much more that goes along with it. I have met so many wonderful people and formed so many lifelong friendships. It has almost become like a little sorority now, and every year we get together at the conference and celebrate our new friends joining us in the Delta scholarship club. It has also become an amazing support network. We are spread across many airlines now, although many have also ended up at Delta, and whenever I have a question about anything—whether it is company-related or just a general question—I have a whole list of girls I can call.

I am so thankful for being chosen for this scholarship and all the benefits I have received from it. I cannot thank Women in Aviation International and Delta Air Lines enough. If there is anyone out there considering applying for one of these great scholarships, I cannot urge you strongly enough to give it a shot—you never know what might happen.



# PIA BERGQVIST

WAI 5710

Oak Park, California

Flight Training Magazine Conference Registration Scholarship (2000)

As a budding pilot in 1999, I was researching different ways to reduce the cost of flight training in my quest for an airline pilot career. I applied for a Women in Aviation International scholarship and was fortunate to win an all-expenses-paid trip to the International Women in Aviation Conference in Memphis, Tennessee, in 2000, through AOPA's *Flight Training* magazine. The experience turned out to be awe-inspiring and life altering.

Eyes and ears wide open, I listened as a female astronaut, an SR-71 pilot, and several executives from international organizations spoke at the opening sessions. I know it sounds extremely narrow-minded now, but in those days I had no idea that women could reach such interesting, high-level positions. Being exposed to these people and feeling the warmth in the conference halls made me realize that I, a young woman from a tiny town in Sweden, could achieve more than I had ever dreamed possible.

Another speaker at the Memphis conference was Lane Wallace, who at that time was a writer for *Flying* magazine. While



PIA BERGQVIST

my dream then was to become an airline pilot—the only pilot job I was aware of at the time—Lane’s talk was one of many that opened up my eyes to the many possibilities in the field of aviation. I could never have dreamed that a decade later I would be fortunate enough to have her job.

The scholarship to attend the International Women in Aviation Conference also allowed me the opportunity to gain many industry contacts, some of which have grown strong through the past 15 years. These contacts have not only become some of my best friends in the world, but also have helped me through the ups and downs of this cyclic and crazy industry.

After building hours as a flight instructor, I excitedly applied for an airline job on September 10, 2001. My dream of becoming an airline pilot was literally destroyed the following day. But instead of sitting at the front of a Boeing or Airbus, I have had a very fun and varied career in general aviation.

As an aircraft sales representative and aviation journalist, I’ve had a chance to fly in most of the states in the U.S. in more airplane types than I can keep track of. I’ve been trained in aerobatics and how to land on extremely short backcountry airstrips. I’ve landed airplanes on pavement, concrete, dirt, grass, water, and snow. I’ve bought two airplanes.

I’ve had more fun in my career than I could have dreamed possible. And through it all I’ve formed friendships with people in the industry that I know will last a lifetime. I can’t imagine a more satisfying career.

I know that much of my success is due to hard work, maintaining relationships, and a lot of luck. But I am certain that I would have never had the opportunities I have had if it wasn’t for my WAI scholarship.



## KATELYN BOBALIK

WAI 36271

Orlando, Florida

Delta Airlines Aviation Maintenance/  
Aviation Business Management (2012)



KATELYN BOBALIK

The Delta Air Lines Scholarship opened up new possibilities for me. Not only did it allow me to attend the 2012 International Women in Aviation Conference in Dallas, Texas, but it also gave me the opportunity to graduate earlier than expected in December 2013.

At the conference I was able to make several invaluable connections with people in the aviation industry, as well as

gain knowledge of industry trends in regards to careers for women.

In February 2013, I was hired as the safety management analyst for Signature Flight Support, the world's largest fixed based operations network. Most recently, I was promoted to area manager of HS&E. At Signature, I was happy to reconnect with people that I met through Women in Aviation International. Signature Flight Support is very supportive of WAI, and has offered scholarships through the organization.

I am still an active member and huge advocate of WAI, and I would strongly encourage anyone in the aviation industry to search and apply for scholarships offered. It took a lot of hard work, but I have WAI and Delta Air Lines to thank for the position I am in now. The scholarship I received was the first step on a path that led me to a successful career in aviation!



## LINDSAY BURNS

WAI 52179

Tampa, Florida

Delta Air Lines Boeing B737-800 Type Rating (2013)

Aviation was never something I considered as a career growing up. I loved the excitement of flying as a passenger, but had never seen or heard of a female pilot. It never occurred to me that I could be behind the controls someday.

I graduated from the International Baccalaureate program with honors before attending the University of Florida, where I earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Management, a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, and a minor in international studies following a semester spent studying abroad in Costa Rica.

After graduation I went to work in corporate human resources, coordinating training programs for a well-known advisory/auditing firm before joining a nonprofit that funded research for pediatric cancer. Thanks to the courageous kids who fought to survive, I realized the fragility of life and resolved to leave my windowless cubicle behind in order to experience life to the fullest.

Since I was missing the days of study abroad, a neighbor and former Delta flight attendant suggested I apply to be a flight attendant

with an airline and travel the world. I was hired at Continental and quickly caught the aviation bug. However, I yearned to take on bigger challenges, and with the encouragement of several pilot friends began taking flight lessons.

At ATP flight school, I earned all of my certificates and ratings in just seven months. I instructed there for an additional eight months before landing a job at ExpressJet. I successfully completed EMB-145 initial training just 15 months after my very first private pilot lesson.

About a year after I began flying for ExpressJet, I applied for and was awarded a Delta Air Lines Boeing 737 Type Rating Scholarship through Women in Aviation International. It was a truly pivotal moment in my aviation career and an invaluable and most enjoyable experience, and quickly led to an interview with Delta.

I was hired and began training in April 2014. I have been flying the B-757/B-767 at Delta for more than a year now, served as a pilot mentor in Delta's booth at the 2014 International Women in Aviation Conference in Dallas, and recently accepted a new role as an advanced qualification first officer. I assist and accompany captains on qualification trips into and out of challenging special qualification airports.

The WAI scholarship program not only accelerated my transition from the regional world to a major airline exponentially, but more importantly, it also allowed me to become part of a truly special group of past and present Delta scholarship recipients. These ladies are not only fantastic mentors and talented aviators, but also exceptional women and true friends for whom I am so very grateful.





# FELICITY CASHMAN

Rensselaer, New York

**Above and Beyond Corporate Flight Attendant Training (2015)**



FELICITY CASHMAN

**W**omen in Aviation International has been the most inspirational organization I have belonged to. The inspiration I have received from the incredible stories and conferences have pushed me to never quit in the pursuit of my dreams.

I wasn't always on track to be in aviation. In fact, when it came time to decide what I was going to commit to for a career, I chose teaching and earned my master's in Music Education. Do I regret the decision? Not at all. My heart was given to students. However, it was always noted how the lessons I taught were brought back to aviation, exploring, and travel.

Aside from teaching, I began volunteer wish granting with Make-A-Wish, and worked closely with Southwest Airlines to ensure that our wish kids and families had an amazing experience. Seeing the pilots and flight attendants come out and greet them like royalty brought back memories of why I wanted to be a flight attendant.

I had a pair of wings on my desk. I started to travel more, and watch the crews. Something about how they give their all to the passengers in greeting them and their knowledge of aviation captivated me just as it did as a child on my first flights.

I finally decided to go for my dream. I resigned from teaching and moved to Wisconsin to join Wisconsin Aviation, working closely with corporate aviation and part 135/91 flight attendants. Through Women in Aviation International, I was

encouraged to never give up, keep learning, and most importantly, be involved in the largest support group of amazing people who love aviation.

In January 2015 I was given the opportunity to become the flight attendant on Air Charter Express's Embraer 120. Just a few weeks after my first flight, I received a WAI scholarship to further my knowledge in VIP/corporate training in Fort Lauderdale.

My goal is to inspire others to follow their dreams. If you aren't waking up every morning loving your job, make a change. Life is too short. Thanks to WAI, I realized this, and I could not be more thankful to have such an incredible career. Make a change, and go fly with it.



# JENNY CHABRIAN

WAI 5192

Neptune Beach, Florida

**Boeing Career Enhancement (2011)**

**Airbus Leadership Award (2015)**



JENNY CHABRIAN

**M**y roots are fiercely planted in volunteering. I started as a volunteer firefighter/EMS explorer at age 14 and have been running into everything from burning buildings to severe weather ever since. Aviation has been a family tradition and hobby for me since before I could walk.

I attended Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida, for both my undergrad in Homeland Se-

curity and I am currently working on my master's in Emergency Management. I have been a member of WAI for many years; however, it was at ERAU that I was able to learn more about the scholarship program and what it has to offer students. During my undergrad I had two part-time jobs. I was an executive board member of my sorority, Alpha Xi Delta, and chaired the university's community volunteering organization, the Volunteer Network. I was busy but made the time to apply for scholarships and was awarded the Boeing Company Career Enhancement Scholarship. The extra money Boeing provided me gave me the breathing room to be able to take an unpaid dream internship with Orlando Secret Service.

After earning my bachelor's I was offered an administrative position within Embry-Riddle's safety and security department. It was during this time that I worked full time and was pursuing my master's in Emergency Management that I received the Airbus Leadership Grant. I was ecstatic and truly gained a renewed sense of purpose for what I was doing and where I wanted to go. I had always believed in myself, but now other people believed in me so much that they gave me money to pursue my goals! With my renewed sense of purpose and financial footing, I had the confidence to take a true leap of faith. Do not be afraid to leave stability in mediocrity for the potential only you may see. Through this grant I was able to take time for me and gain specific training certifications that helped propel me into the position I have today.

Currently I am living the dream as a disaster field trainer for FEMA, for which I am deployed all over the United States as a first responder to federally declared disasters. During non-disaster deployments I provide incident command and emergency management training to everyone from regular citizens to FEMA employees to military installments. The real pinnacle of all my education and the time spent applying for scholarships has provided me the opportunity to be a part of the calm for people who are having the worst day they've ever had.

My advice to those interested in obtaining a scholarship is to apply, apply, apply! Every year I applied for multiple scholarships; for some I never even made it into the final cut. Applying for scholarships also provides the opportunity to network within those companies to which your professional goals align.

Remember to be professional *and* passionate. You are speaking to real people about the real you; they can't hear what you don't tell them. Don't look at it as trying to influence the scholarship committee with impressively big words, but realize that your soft skills are actually really important too. Communicating to the scholarship committee that you have a positive attitude along with a willingness to learn can really give you a leg up in getting that scholarship and maybe even an interview with the company in the future.

That is what is so inspiring about this scholarship program. You can get a renewed sense of purpose, as well as some financial freedom to help with those little struggles that pop up along your journey to realizing your potential.

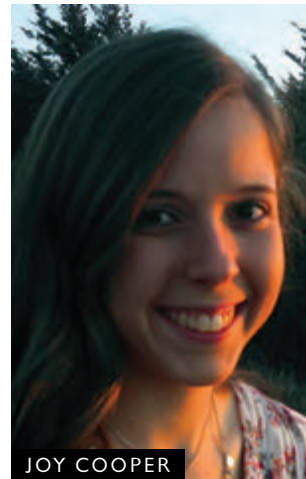


# JOY COOPER

Grover, Missouri

Airbus Leadership Award (2012)

WAI Mile High Chapter Empowerment Scholarship (2013)



I was in my last year of college, anticipating graduating with my associate's degree in air traffic control from LeTourneau University. From what I had been told, I knew to expect it would be at least six months to a year after graduation before I would be hired by the FAA. However, I did not want to simply complete school and move back home to work in a random, non-aviation job and wait for the magic phone call.

In the previous year, I had received a scholarship from Airbus through Women in Aviation International that had enabled me to complete my degree and earn my private pilot certificate. During my last year of college I discovered another scholarship through WAI from the WAI Mile High Chapter for Jeppesen commercial aviation dispatch training. I had no knowledge of aviation dispatch as a career, but soon learned that dispatching was, in many ways, similar to ATC.

I received a full scholarship and completed the course for my FAA dispatch certificate. The one caveat to the FAA certificate was that I had to be 23 years old to receive my certificate, even though I completed and passed all of the exams. That meant I still had six months to burn while growing older!

This is where Trans States Airlines stepped into the picture. The manager of operations for Trans States interviewed most of the students in my dispatch course and suggested that I work as a crew scheduler for them until my 23rd birthday, when I could switch departments and become a dispatcher. I agreed and moved to St. Louis, Missouri, a month later.

Crew scheduling was an adventure. I gained a whole new perspective of how the airlines worked and began to uncover the bigger picture of who and what makes an airline operate. Though it may sound weird, I actually enjoyed scheduling. Every day new challenges arose that each required a different solution. Since I knew that I would be transferring to the dispatch department, I tried to incorporate what I was learning as a scheduler with how that information related to the dispatcher.

After roughly six months of scheduling, I transferred to the dispatch portion of operations. The skills that I had learned

at Jeppesen were finally put to use! I saw firsthand the value of attention to detail in regards to regulations, weather, ATC, and crew duty limitations. The course at Jeppesen had so ingrained those details that they were hard to forget, even after six months. Four short months later I was promoted to be the dispatch duty manager—this meant that I was directly responsible for the airline’s operations during my shift.

At first, the thought was a little overwhelming. “You mean you are giving me the power to cancel and delay flights?” “I haven’t even worked winter operations!” “What extra requirements will there be when we start flying to Canada?” Many different questions and concerns popped up that caused me to question my experience and ability to be a good manager. Through the help of God and my patient co-workers, I learned that I had been prepared all along for this job and just did not know it.

I absolutely love my job and would not trade it for anything. I owe my success to the faith others have in me and the skills I was able to develop due to the generosity of Airbus and Jeppesen/Boeing through WAI’s scholarship program.

For those of you who are wondering what the next step is, don’t stop looking for ways to fulfill your dream. Take life one step at a time and never allow fear or doubt to hinder you in becoming the amazing woman that you truly are.



## ANDREA COPPICK

WAI 6452

Seattle, Washington

Thrush Aircraft Agricultural Pilot Scholarship (2014)

It was an honor to receive the first Thrush Agricultural Aviation Scholarship. It allowed me to explore an aspect of aviation I had never before considered. Agricultural flying is challenging and really tested my many years of aviation experience. A pilot’s skills in stick and rudder con-



ANDREA COPPICK

trol, ground reference maneuvers, and judgment are all tested in the agricultural flying environment. It was a great opportunity to hone these skills, which will translate over to my current aviation job and provide more job options in my future. Many thanks to Thrush Aircraft Company and Flying Tigers Ag Flight School!



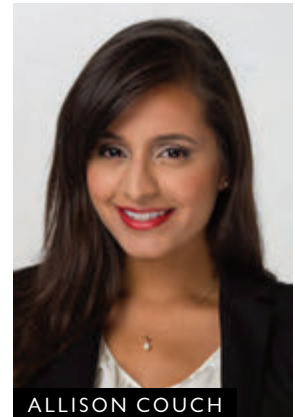
## ALLISON COUCH

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Women in Corporate Aviation International Scholarship (2013)

Women in Aviation Management Scholarship (2014)

I still vividly remember my proudest moment, when I was invited to attend the 2014 International Women in Aviation Conference in Orlando, Florida, where I was presented with the Women in Aviation Management Scholarship. The event was particularly exciting as my parents were in the room to witness the moment. In 2013, I was honored to be awarded the Women in Corporate Aviation International Scholarship. These scholarships provided substantial funding to my continuing education at a time when I had to survive on a tight budget. Further, I was fortunate to receive an additional training scholarship from Women in Corporate Aviation to attend the MedAire Inflight Illness and Injury training course on how to manage in-flight medical emergencies. The training proved to be invaluable, as I’ve since had to apply what I learned to a real-life situation in my current role.



ALLISON COUCH

My career in aviation started in 2009 when I nervously attended my first class in the Aviation Management Program at Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario, where I graduated with honors. I haven’t looked back since. I was fortunate to obtain and complete three co-op work terms during the school period with Transport Canada, Emirates Airlines, and Pratt & Whitney Canada. It was the great people I met and worked with at these organizations who encouraged me to get more involved in my school, and more involved in the industry. As a result, I joined WAI and became a director for the WAI Upper Canada Chapter.

After graduation I worked for Ornge Air, an emergency medical service provider, as its aerodrome specialist and subsequently with SkyService Business Aviation in the maintenance planning department. In my spare time I took flying lessons at a local

flight school and earned my private pilot certificate—despite some crooked takeoffs and bumpy landings.

In 2015, I couldn't resist the opportunity to accept a position with Emirates Airlines in Dubai as a cabin crewmember on their fleet of Airbus A380 and Boeing 777 aircraft. After all of that studying at school and earning entry-level positions with two great companies, I needed to get out and explore the world. I moved to Dubai and now I'm working with individuals from all over the world from so many different cultural backgrounds, who speak hundreds of different languages. I've been to places I never knew existed.

I've also completed 75 percent of the curriculum with Griffith University toward a master's degree in aviation management. The WAI scholarship program was an immense help in funding my continuing education. It helped me obtain the specialized education and skills that allow me to positively contribute to the aviation industry.

I wish to express a sincere thank you to the leadership team at WAI, as well as the generous sponsors and corporate members who have the confidence to contribute and invest in the WAI scholarship program. Your hard work and the inspiration you pass down to the membership is needed encouragement for those of us who are new to the industry and sometimes need a little push to navigate our way through it. I'm looking forward to growing my career and inspiring others to embrace an exciting path in aviation. Moreover, I wish to encourage my colleagues and associates to make a difference.



## SYLVIE DeLaHUNT

Waldorf, Maryland

Delta Air Lines Engineering Scholarship (2013)



As the recipient of the 2013 Delta Air Lines Engineering Scholarship, I was invited to attend the 24th annual International Women in Aviation Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. The conference provided the opportunity for me to listen to guest speakers, attend informative panels, and network with inspiring women who are leading the way in the aviation industry. This experience was espe-

cially important to me because at the University of Maryland, only 13 percent of undergraduate aerospace engineering students are women. Meeting other smart and driven women at the conference motivated me to strive to make a difference for women in my field and to counter the implicit biases that deter female engineers.

My experiences at the International Women in Aviation Conference inspired me to do my part to help attract and retain more female aerospace engineering students. As part of my technical writing course, I researched the low enrollment of women in engineering, and developed a proposal suggesting that the A. James Clark School of Engineering at Maryland offer an introductory woodshop course for first-semester students. The goal of the course would be to provide women with machining experience, which they are less likely to receive growing up due to gender norms, thereby reducing the likelihood of stereotype threat. Additionally, my op-ed titled "Encouraging Female Engineers" was published by the *Baltimore Sun* and received more than 5,500 "likes" when featured on Amy Poehler's Smart Girls Facebook page.

I am actively involved as a founding board member for Women in Aeronautics and Astronautics, a new student group for women interested in aerospace engineering at Maryland.

Thanks in part to the support of my Delta Air Lines Engineering Scholarship through Women in Aviation International, I had the opportunity as an undergraduate to participate in research, study abroad trips, and numerous extracurricular activities. I gained research experience as a member of Maryland's record-breaking human-powered helicopter team, and through my individual honors thesis project. My thesis focused on the development of a drop test stand that could be used to compare the impact absorption properties of energy-absorbing materials, such as those that would be used in the seats or bulkheads of aircraft and cars. Additionally, I participated in the GEA Summer Aerospace Program in Toulouse, France, with three of the leading aviation institutions of higher education in Europe for the training of aerospace engineers, air traffic controllers, and pilots. Learning about airline economics and international regulations was a fantastic supplement to the traditional aerospace education I received at my university.

After graduating magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering and a minor in international engineering in May 2014, I continued on at Maryland to pursue a graduate degree in aerospace engineering, with a specialization in flight dynamics and control. My technical background and involvement in broader impact activities as an undergraduate student helped me receive a prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to support my graduate studies.

After completing my graduate degree, I am excited to use my technical background and skills to contribute to the broader aerospace engineering industry. I hope to bring a unique perspective to the field, and I look forward to future opportunities to encourage more women to pursue aerospace engineering.

ROSE  
DORCEY

WAI 12645

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Diane Endres Ballweg Scholarship (2015)



ROSE DORCEY

There was a point in my life, recently in fact, when I didn't think I had any business applying for a Women in Aviation International scholarship. At 53 years old, my feeling was, "Leave that opportunity for the younger women who are just starting out." But as time went on, I learned some things: Thousands of dollars in flight training funds industrywide go unawarded each year, and there are scholarships available for women of a certain age—call them mature women if you please. Those facts changed my thought process about applying for scholarships, and I'm glad I did.

In 2015, I was awarded the Diane Endres Ballweg Scholarship, awarded to a woman over 30 who is learning to fly or pursuing an advanced certificate or rating. As a private pilot with an instrument rating, I fit the requirement, so I applied. When I learned that I was selected as the recipient, it was quite gratifying. Knowing that someone looked at my aviation volunteerism and flying background and felt strongly enough to select me provided a huge boost of confidence. My background, which includes some 20 years of flying as a private pilot, is not as impressive as the female airline, military, or corporate pilots I know, but by Diane choosing me, it served as affirmation that I should continue my flight training goals, and finally become a commercial pilot. What greater gift can a scholarship give?

In my scholarship application essay, I wrote about another reason for me to pursue my commercial certificate at this age. That part was easy: I want to be a role model for my 1-year-old grandson. I want him to one day say, "Grandma, let's go flying today." I want him—and people of all ages—to look at me and say, "If she's doing that, then I can (and should) follow my dreams, too." I want to be proof that no matter our age, we should pursue our passions, challenge ourselves, and reach for every goal.

I also wrote of how flying is beneficial to my wellbeing, for

the part of me that achingly yearns for adventure and exploration. For me, advancing in aviation is about self-improvement, self-confidence, and personal satisfaction. And when my kids, grandkids, or anyone sees that, I believe it may help convince them to never stop learning or believing in themselves.

Since learning of this honor, I've completed the commercial written and have scheduled several flights with my instructor. When I pass the oral and practical exam to become a commercial pilot, it will be the realization of a goal that I have had since as far back as 1991. It's taking me awhile to get there, as several life changes appeared along the way: building a new life and career after a divorce, making new friends, completing my bachelor's degree, and finding my place in a new city. Having been awarded this scholarship, I'm leaving the challenges of the past behind, thinking bigger, and again considering the possibility of becoming a flight instructor—that's the kind of confidence receiving a scholarship can give.

I don't talk to many women about being a pilot, but when asked, I tell them the details. I've found that many women say how cool it is, how brave I must be, and how there must be so much to learn. Sadly, I often hear, "I could never do that." To that I always say, "Try an introductory flight." We can all do more than our minds sometimes tell us. All it takes is that first step and encouragement along the way, as I've received through the Diane Endres Ballweg Scholarship.

BETTINA  
EDELSTEIN

WAI 49308

Burlington, Vermont

Pratt & Whitney Maintenance Scholarship (2014)

It took two decades to find my way back to aviation—and this time it would be for keeps. In 2012, I quit the New York City newsroom that had been my work home for 15 years, swapping its skyscraper cubicles for the rolling toolboxes, grease, and sweat of aircraft mechanic school in Vermont. Last year, with FAA ticket in hand, I landed my first job as a certified airframe and powerplant mechanic. I'm now a technician at Pratt & Whitney Engine Services, based at Burlington International Airport in Burlington, Vermont. On days off, when I can, I head for the airport to fly for fun.

Switching careers is rarely easy. I'd be lying if I said I never felt the buffeting wind of uncertainty. Sure, there were joyful moments, like that glowing feeling from a task well done. And the work itself—disassembly, reassembly, troubleshooting—requires an absorption that I find deeply satisfying. Yet I had my struggles, especially given the few opportunities I'd had





BETTINA EDELSTEIN

in my earlier life to explore any inclination toward things mechanical. My patience and ability to persevere have been honed through this experience, which has also taught me an essential truth: Learning is the key to really living.

From my Manhattan apartment I could see small aircraft flying the route known to pilots as the Hudson River Corridor. Though I'd earned a private pilot certificate in my 20s, I'd given up flying to pursue journalism in the big city. But I'd become restless; I needed a fresh challenge. Trouble was, I had no bearing on what that might be.

One bright spring day, watching a Piper Warrior tootle by, I decided to go up in a small airplane again. The joyride with a flight instructor quickly turned into regular flight lessons to revive my currency as a pilot. And that dormant passion of mine, now sparked, kindled a curiosity that would take me to an entirely new place.

The more time I spent around airplanes, the more I wanted to know about their nuts and bolts. My instructor, a Korean

and Vietnam war veteran who had served as an aircraft mechanic in the Air Force, was often in the maintenance hangars; I followed him like a hungry hound, eager for any scrap of info on what made airplanes tick. "Would it be crazy," I eventually asked, "for me to try to get an A&P license?"

"It's not crazy," he said, "if that's what you really want to do."

And so I moved to Vermont, immersed myself in school, and because of the intensity of it all, kept at bay the question of what to do and where to go after graduation. The Pratt & Whitney training scholarship I was awarded through Women in Aviation International in 2014 was instrumental in helping me chart my course.

Ten days after passing the last of my FAA exams, I took a seat at the Pratt & Whitney Customer Training Center in East Hartford. My classmates included a group from the military, a mechanic-instructor from a U.S. carrier, and an aeronautical engineer from an African state airline. Though I'd studied turbine engines in school, I'd never gotten up close and personal with the likes of a big turbofan number like the PW2000. Its jumble of rigid lines and attached devices looked daunting, yet soon enough I could identify various systems. We had hands-on projects, too, which yielded valuable lessons in teamwork. I gained not only a basic understanding of one particular turbofan model but also a broader appreciation of turbine engines in general.

And I came away with a sense of direction. I was keen to work on powerplants, I realized, and I was drawn to the elegance of the turbine engine. Lucky me—I've not only found my calling, but also a new place to call home.



## APRIL ERHARDT

WAI 26813

Soldota, Alaska

**Women in Aviation International Achievement Award (2013)**

**Aero Femme (2014)**

**Virginia Volk Memorial Scholarship (2015)**

I began taking flying lessons as a "starving" college student. I was funding college on my own due to my father's death, and didn't have a clue how I would be able to fly in addition to attending school. However, I had a long-term goal of becoming a missionary pilot and knew that the steps I was taking were necessary, even if not well understood.

Since joining Women in Aviation International, the organization has assisted me greatly. I first became a member in 2005 and have been awarded several scholarships that have aided in funding many of my ratings. I now work with Missionary Aviation Repair Center in Soldotna, Alaska. Over the past 10 years, I have been able to watch my dreams become a reality. This is something that few have the opportunity of experiencing. It would have been a much harder journey had I not experienced the financial gifts of WAI scholarships!



# PATRICIA ESPINOSA

WAI 53744

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Cochise Community College/Northrup Grumman (2014)



PATRICIA ESPINOSA

I grew up in a small town by a municipal airport where I would see airplanes flying over my house almost daily. Sometimes I would walk over to the airport and watch airplanes land and take off for hours. I also translated aviation documentaries for my grandfather, who loves flight and is fascinated with World War II, so I was born into a passion for aviation. I fell in love with World War II fighters—their history and their influence in the war just drew me in. In particular the F-4U Corsair makes my heart pitter-patter; it's just beautiful. Over the years, my passion has grown and to this day my grandfather and I continue our aviation conversations, even more so thanks to all the help I've received from Women in Aviation International.

Flying had always been a dream, but not something I actually thought I could achieve. There's a community college a few miles outside my hometown of Douglas, Arizona, that has a great program run by Belinda Burnett. I toured it many times while I was in high school. Each time I went, I thought to myself, "Maybe this time I'll start." The new facility is amazing and the teachers were always happy to talk to

me, but each time after daydreaming of the possibilities, the costs of flight brought my head out of the clouds and back down to earth. Flying just wasn't something I could afford on my own.

Then my family stepped in and helped me get started. Belinda, the director of aviation at Cochise College, talked to my ground school class about WAI, and encouraged everyone to become members. Her enthusiasm was key in my decision to become a member. It was during that meeting that Belinda told us about the Cochise College flight training scholarship sponsored by Northrup Grumman, which provides \$5,000 for Women in Aviation International members with a desire to pursue an aviation career.

After some legwork and plenty of help from friends and the staff at Cochise, I submitted my application for the scholarship. It felt great to submit it, but the wait was a little nerve-racking, because the money in my flight account was running out and I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to finish the program. Then Belinda called me into her office to tell me that I had been selected to receive the scholarship. It changed my life and helped make my dreams of becoming a pilot come true. Thanks to Women in Aviation International, flying is within my reach. I believe that everything is attainable if you work hard and do not give up on yourself.

In January I accepted a position outside of aviation that has taken me far away from the clear skies and amazing sunsets of Arizona and into the wintery embrace of the north in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. It is important to me to do whatever I can for the aviation community that has given me so much, so I joined the volunteer pilot program with Hope Air. It is a charity organization that arranges free flights for Canadians in need to get to medical facilities for health care.

At the end of the day, I enjoy helping others because it brings me a sense of fulfillment like nothing else. It reminds me that bad situations will always work themselves out, and there will always be helping hands to pull you up when times are hard. Knowing that I've done something positive for someone else during the hardest time of his or her life has made me reevaluate my career goals. This is a major reason I hope to start my own business in Arizona to help fight wildfires when I complete my aviation training. Right now it's just a dream. I know firsthand that it won't be easy. Thanks to Women in Aviation International, I've met so many amazing women in the community who have achieved their own dreams that they inspire me to keep pushing myself.

For anyone who might be struggling, as I was, I want to remind you to never underestimate yourself and go for it. Be an active member in the aviation community and work toward inspiring and educating more women about what aviation is all about, and how they too can make their dreams come true. Aviation is a community of people who share the love for the sky and work together to make it a safer place.

Aviation has been such a humbling experience for me in general, and even if I never make it to my destination, I know I've accomplished things that have made me genuinely happy, and I have made friendships that will last a lifetime.



# THERESA FARLEY

WAI 50244

Chandler, Arizona

AOPA Student Pilot Scholarship (2012)



THERESA FARLEY

I won my very first flying scholarship in 2012 from AOPA for \$3,000, which I accepted in Dallas at the International Women in Aviation Conference. That year I was also awarded \$1,000 by my local chapter of the Ninety-Nines. Both scholarships helped me finish my private certificate. I had saved \$10,000 to pay for my private pilot training, but as they say, in aviation everything takes longer and costs more than you thought it would.

Today, I am studying and staying current at my flight school. I am also involved in my local WAI and Ninety-Nines chapters, as well as my Civil Air Patrol squadron. I do work in an aviation-related field and make a difference every day; however, it is not where my passion is. My passion will lead me to the airport, and I hope to complete my commercial certificate in the near future.



# KELLY FISHER

Melville, New York

International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISA+21)

CFI Multiengine Rating Scholarship (2013)

In 2013, I was awarded a scholarship to cover training for my multiengine instructor rating. As a CFII at the time, it was an unbelievable award to win. I was more than ecstatic to begin my multiengine instructor training. Without this scholarship to further my abilities as a certified flight instructor, I would never have been able to take this next step in achieving my lifetime goals of pursuing my career in flying. My dream has always been to become a highly achieved and very capable international pilot. With the help I received from WAI, this dream became a reality!

Since high school, I have been extremely intrigued by the idea of “touching a cloud.” My first flight lesson demonstrated to me just how unbelievable the feeling can be. But more importantly, the experience showed me how attainable my dream was.

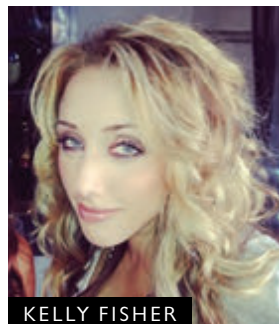
My aviation career began when I received my first job as a CFI at Nassau Flyers at Republic Airport, New York. It then progressed to cross-country flights to Bar Harbor, Maine, just to share a lobster roll with some peers. Shortly after, I found myself sitting right seat to the captain of Air Flamenco, where I was able to help fly my entire family to a private island off of Puerto Rico. Then, I took my first international flight, where I flew myself to the Exuma Islands of the Bahamas. From this point, I knew I was hooked.

Through Angel Flight and the help of a special friend, I was able to fly many deserving patients free of charge to obtain the care and attention that they needed. These charity flights were by far the most inspirational and valuable flights, not only for the patients, but for me as well.

Now I am happy to say I am in a position I only imagined myself to be in five years ago. I am a line captain for a private charter company, flying a Falcon 10 and Falcon 50. Sharing my love of aviation with others has become my passion. I greatly appreciate the opportunity I was granted by WAI and the International Society of Women Airline Pilots to receive my teaching certification in multiengine aircraft.

My advice to women pursuing a scholarship is to have persistence. Scholarships are offered each year. If you do not receive one the first year you apply, try until you are successful. Your experiences and skill sets change as time goes on, and your qualifications may be just what the judges are looking for that year.

Winning this scholarship helped me share my passion of aviation. This is not only the best gift to receive, but also to be able to pass on to others.



KELLY FISHER



# BRANDI FLINN

WAI 60852

Menominee, Michigan

**Sporty's Foundation Flight Training Scholarship for Small-Aircraft Maintenance Technician (2015)**



BRANDI FLINN

When I was 15 years old, I got the opportunity to ride in a helicopter during a hometown air show, my first time leaving the ground. The helicopter was barely big enough for two people, with no doors installed, but it was the most incredible experience. Since my first ride, I have spent most of my life surrounding myself in aviation. I find it to be the most rewarding lifestyle, and I get the chance to be a part of a large community of aviation enthusiasts, from mechanics and pilots to CTOs and homebuilders.

I began working toward my passion for a career in aviation in 2009, in the aviation maintenance program at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Michigan. With my two years of trade school, I received an associate's degree in Applied Sciences, and my airframe and powerplant certificate in June 2012. During school, I was the Aviation Maintenance Club president and was awarded Outstanding AMT Student of the Year for 2011-2012.

My aviation home is at Enstrom Helicopter in Menominee, Michigan, where I have been a dynamic components technician for the past three years. I am responsible for assembling the flight-critical components on the Enstrom helicopters,

such as the tail rotor gearbox and overrunning clutch. I also perform work under a 14 CFR Part 65 Repair Station for customers all over the world.

I volunteer as a docent at the EAA AirVenture Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and I manage a blog at [waviation.weebly.com](http://waviation.weebly.com) to encourage and inspire women of all backgrounds to get involved in aviation through different events and opportunities, as well as to share my story.

The Sporty's Foundation Flight Training Scholarship for Small-Aircraft Maintenance Technician included \$5,000 to begin my flight training, and assistance in covering the expenses to attend the 2015 International Women in Aviation Conference in Dallas, Texas. As of June 2015, I am learning how to fly in a Cessna 172K. In the distant future, I want to challenge my passion for aviation in places such as Alaska, taking advantage of both my mechanic and pilot certificates as a bush pilot.

Women in Aviation International gives women in all aspects of aviation the chance to expand in their career and increase their passion for the sky. I am very blessed for it has given me the opportunity to accomplish my one of my biggest aviation dreams—to become a pilot.



# TANYA GATLIN

Aurora, Colorado

**Bombardier Learjet 45 Type Rating Scholarship (2014)**



TANYA GATLIN

I am so grateful to have been chosen as the 2014 winner of the Bombardier Learjet 45 Type Rating Scholarship. I learned to fly as a teenager and have always aspired to be a pilot. However, having gotten married in my early 20s, and then divorced at 30—making me a single parent for the last 12 years—life got in the way. Though slow coming, I have finally pursued my goals.

I worked for NASA at Johnson Space Center as an instructor on the space shuttle, training astronauts for five years from 2003 to 2008. Although this was a fascinating job, it didn't further my flying career or provide any time in an airplane. When the shuttle program ended, I went to work as a full time professor at Metropolitan State University in Denver, where I teach students in aviation and aerospace, and also serve as

the head coach of our precision flight team. I have worked in this position for the past five years, as well as cleaning houses part time in an effort to pay the bills and continue my flying. My true passion is in a cockpit, and I have flight instructed over the years on a part-time basis to fulfill these passions.

Winning the Bombardier Learjet 45 Type Rating Scholarship opened many doors for me. The biggest benefit was that it allowed me to accomplish my ATP checkride before the regulations changed in 2014. I planned my training with Bombardier in July, as it was necessary that I do the type rating training during the summer months when I was not working and teaching at the university. By the end of June 2014, I was approaching 1,500 hours' total time. Being limited on time, I quickly acquired the last remaining necessary hours and took a written test before the July 1 deadline.

I went through the type rating process in July in Dallas/Fort Worth. The training was hard, but very rewarding. It was the first jet airplane I had ever had experience with, and the FMS and autopilot systems were also very new to me. I surprised my instructor by successfully completing the checkride without any additional training, and was told that it is abnormal to come into a type rating as "inexperienced" as I was (especially since I didn't have a full-time flying job, as the other trainees there did), and be able to successfully complete the training. At the end of my training, my ATP checkride was incorporated into the type ride, and I was able to earn my ATP certificate.

Since receiving certification, I have been hired by Trans States Airlines. I continue to teach at the university, but I also now have the amazing opportunity to be flying the Embraer 145 Regional Jet. I am very grateful for the training and award that I was given, as it has presented many new opportunities in my life. My encouragement to others is to persevere through hardships, and to continue to follow any dreams of flying.



## MAUREEN HALLACY

WAI 2599

Chicago, Illinois

International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISA+21)

B-737 Type Rating (2014)

I am grateful to the members of ISA+21 and Women in Aviation International for their support and recognition. I won a Boeing 737 type rating scholarship in 2014, and completed the certificate through Higher Power Aviation. I am currently a captain on the Embraer Regional Jet at American Eagle Airlines (Envoy), where I have been since early 2000. Career prospects were bleak since 9/11, and just winning the scholarship made me feel validated, and that the perseverance over the years was being rewarded.

Now that the tide has turned in the industry, I hope the additional rating gives me a competitive edge in moving on to a major airline. Regardless of the tangible benefits, the whole

experience was professionally invigorating, from preparing for the interview, to studying a more complex aircraft, to meeting fellow pilots in the program. I found it challenging but extremely satisfying to achieve the type rating.



## JULIA HARRINGTON

WAI 42869

Belvidere, Illinois

Anne Bridge Baddour Aviation Scholarship (2015)



JULIA HARRINGTON

After a few years of applying for different scholarships through Women in Aviation, I was fortunate enough to be awarded with the 2015 Anne Bridge Baddour Aviation Scholarship. I'm so grateful for the opportunities I have received through this scholarship. The scholarship program that WAI provides is such a wonderful part of the organization, and I know many pilots, like me, are very thankful for the scholarships that assist in achieving long-sought-after career goals.

I'm currently using this scholarship to attain my remaining flight time requirements so that I may soon qualify for an airline transport pilot certificate. I've dreamed for years about becoming a professional aviator, and with the help of this scholarship, those dreams are becoming realities.

I have wanted to be a pilot since I was a little girl, captivated by airplanes when my dad would take me to air shows. In elementary school, I would bring private pilot study materials to class for quiet reading time. Needless to say, no one was surprised when I took a Young Eagles flight and immediately became hooked. In college I received all of my certificates and ratings while attending the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Before graduating, I earned the flight certificates of commercial multiengine and instrument flight instructor. After graduating, I accepted a full-time position at Lewis University as a flight instructor. I also had the opportunity to fly as an intern for the Discover Flying Challenge with Cessna.

I'm so grateful for the wonderful opportunities that I have been afforded thus far in my budding aviation career. I love instructing; however, without having a multiengine instructor rating, there were some barriers between where I stood and where my professional goals lie. I, like many of my peers, desire to achieve the highest level of pilot certification of airline transport pilot. It's difficult to attain the required amount of flight time for the ATP certificate on flight instruction alone, and I have been using my scholarship funds as a supplement in helping me reach the minimums.

I am a firm believer in the power of a strong role model, especially for young women who desire to pursue aviation as a career. I cannot wait to truly pay forward all of the encouragement I received from many of the women I look up to in aviation. I hope that one day, I can inspire others to fearlessly go after their goals, and pursue their passions.



## KAYLA HARDER

WAI 45141

Fort Myers, Florida

Women in Aviation Achievement Award, Student (2014)



I am a flight instructor at Paragon Flight Training in Fort Myers, Florida, and interning for my aviation mechanic certificates so that I can fly overseas in support of people living in hard to reach places in the world, and provide

safe and reliable transportation in everyday life and in relief work. WAI played an important role in helping me get through college by awarding me the Achievement Award in 2014.

I started flying and discovered my passion for aviation at the age of 16. My family has always been incredibly supportive, sacrificing as much as they could to help me to pursue my dreams. However, with four little sisters who have dreams that are just as important, sometimes what they could give wouldn't cover it. Planes fly on money, right?

When I first started, I cleaned and babysat for my flight instructor, a family friend, in exchange for my flight lessons. I decided that I wanted to go to college and major in aviation, so I started saving money and found a school with scholarships available that would allow me to pursue my dream of flying. San Diego Christian College offered a loan that covered a significant portion of my flight training, which would be forgiven after four years of service with a missionary organization, which is exactly what I had planned on doing. Missionary organizations will not accept applicants with a large debt load, so this was essential.

The program that was covering my aviation fees originally had covered 100 percent of the funds required, but after I finished my instrument rating my second year in school, the program changed. The next year I was supposed to get my commercial certificate, which was going to cost around \$18,000. Just before summer started, they notified us that the program was only going to be able to cover \$7,500 of it. My family was not in a financial position to be able to cover the cost for me, and between the additional loans I had to take out and the money that I was making working full time over the summer, it just wasn't going to be enough. Thankfully I had applied for a scholarship with Women in Aviation International. The \$1,000 that I was awarded was literally just enough to help me get through the most expensive year of my aviation training.

Since then, I have graduated from San Diego Christian College with my commercial and CFI certificates. I was offered a job at Paragon Flight Training, the same flight school where I took some of my first lessons. They have allowed me to work part time as a flight instructor, and part time as an intern for my airframe and powerplant certificates. I have been able to come back to help others discover the same passion for flying that I found six years ago. I have obtained my CFII and my commercial multiengine certificates, and I am looking forward to having the qualifications to apply to missionary organizations within the next two years and continue following my dream of using aviation to support people around the world less fortunate than myself.

Thank you so much to the generous people who have made it possible for so many people to pursue their dreams!



## CINDY HASSELBRING

WAI 22909

Columbia, Maryland

Elisha Hall Memorial Scholarship (2010)

I don't have a long history in aviation. No one in my family flew, I didn't know anyone who flew until I was an adult, and never had a thought it was something I could personally do. I only started flying when it was suggested to me to earn my pilot certificate to pursue my dream of being an astronaut. To me, the amazing part about my journey is that because of my failure to be an astronaut, I achieved my pilot certificate and fell in love with flying and the community of people who share that passion. Honestly, flying has enriched my life in a way I never dreamed possible.

I first learned of the Elisha Hall Memorial Scholarship in *Aviation for Women*. This scholarship did help me get a little closer to achieving my instrument flight rating, although I still haven't finished it. My goal is to complete it by EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2016, and I am now in a better place financially. At the time of receiving the scholarship, I was a teacher with no thought of leaving the classroom, but also no



CINDY HASSELBRING

hope of completing my instrument rating due to finances. It was very encouraging to know that someone believed that I could accomplish this goal, and that meant so much to me. The ladies who supported this particular scholarship were so encouraging to me and I greatly appreciate their support.

I don't have a career within the aviation industry, and I definitely did not end up in a position I would have predicted five years ago, or even three years ago, to be honest. Five years ago, I was entering my 16th year of teaching math at Milan High School in Milan, Michigan. I fully intended to teach nine more years and possibly retire and move to another career. Now, I work in Maryland for the State Superintendent of Public Schools and lead all STEM initiatives for the state. I plan to still be inspiring students to pursue their dreams in aviation and aerospace in some capacity, but am not 100 percent sure what that will look like.

I encourage all of you to fearlessly pursue your dreams. You always miss 100 percent of the chances you don't take, so go after it. I haven't felt confident about everything I have pursued in life, but I always give it my best effort and leave it all on the line. If I had thought I couldn't become an astronaut based on statistics, I would never have had the opportunity to be one of the 120 people to interview as I did in 2012. Some may say to keep your head out of the clouds, but I disagree. They're your dreams—so keep dreaming, no matter how far, or rather, how high they may take you.



## DEBORAH HECKER

WAI 1948

Murphy, Texas

American Airlines 727 Type Rating (1998)

As I am taking a break from cramming as much 777 systems into my brain, I reflect on how much the scholarship I won 17 years ago changed my life. It put me on a path that was never expected or envisioned. I have had the most amazing and exciting journey. The American Airlines

727 Type Rating Scholarship opened so many doors that still reverberate today, and pushed me to explore more areas of interest. My need to continually push myself, mentor others, and give back all derives from that fortuitous day my name was called and I went up on stage.

Back in those days, there were very few scholarships. I remember attending my second conference in 1997, where one lucky lady won a Northwest 747-400 type rating. Now I'm dating myself, but back then the 747 was the bomb, kind of like the 787 or A380 is today. Everyone in attendance was flabbergasted.

I vowed then and there to apply the following year. I kept my vow and applied in 1998 for two scholarships. I worked diligently to produce the best package that I could. I kept going over my package, writing and rewriting my essay, checking even the smallest detail. To my utter surprise, American Airlines called and invited me to interview at the 1998 conference. I was very concerned about getting the time off, being junior at my airline, but I wasn't going to miss out on the opportunity. My wonderful chief pilot made sure that I had the time off.

I took a deep breath, put on my interview suit, and walked into a whole new dimension. I was one of three who were selected. Honored, flabbergasted, and humbled describe my



DEBORAH HECKER

feelings in that moment. To say it literally changed my life is the understatement of the century.

Since being honored by American Airlines, I was hired in April of 1999. Then tragedy struck on September 11, 2001. I just finished

flying the day before and watched the TV in horror with my great friend Evelyne, a United first officer. Evelyne's and my journey have been entwined since our commuter days, when she was awarded an Airbus type rating. Evelyne and I attended the 2002 International Women in Aviation Conference and sat together at the banquet. The whole industry was devastated and it affected the turnout for the conference. As we sat there, we realized that we had to do something for the industry that we loved.

That evening, our Keep Flying Scholarship was founded and the next year we presented our very first award. Since then, we have now offered our scholarship in southern Africa as well. Along the journey, Evelyne and I have met other wonderful pilots who share our vision and have joined our team, including Kimberley, Janet, Christi, and Refilwe. Due to the generosity of our donors, we have given away more than \$70,000 to fund the dreams of others.

If my journey ended there, I would be satisfied, but it continues. With all of my scholarship work, I was asked to manage our American Airlines WAI team. The team planned and coordinated the airline's attendance at the annual confer-

ence. I was the first line pilot selected to manage that team and I had a wonderful three years, working with a phenomenal group. Along the way, we convinced the company to offer several additional scholarships. From these efforts, we now offer engineering, A&P, and veterans scholarships. After that, I transitioned into a management job in our customer experience department. I led a team of pilots that worked on customer projects, focused both on the external and internal customers. My work expanded to include flight service, and I became the first person in the history of American Airlines to be dual qualified as a pilot and flight attendant.

Once our merger with US Airways was announced, I was needed as a project manager for the flight department. I transitioned on to the merger team and assisted with earning our single operation certificate in record time. Along with the integration work, I took on various technical projects that needed oversight. It was a very exciting job, entailing winter operations and emergency response. I was able to get a holdover time iPad app approved for our pilots, as well as redesign our emergency response checklist. It was all very fascinating work that I had no familiarity with, but I relished the opportunity to learn more about the technical side of flight operations. The icing on the cake occurred in 2015 when I was elected to serve on the WAI board of directors. I occasionally still feel the need to pinch myself.

Scholarships really do change your life. I would have never imagined that I had the opportunity to work on the projects that I have and meet the most amazing people. It built my confidence to a level that I enjoy by continually challenging myself, and when interesting opportunities present themselves, I jump at them. I want the American Airlines folks who interviewed me 17 years ago to know just how honored I have been.



## TAMI HEUER

WAI 10139

Fort Wright, Kentucky

Elisha Hall Memorial Scholarship (2011)  
Airline Ground Schools Aircraft Dispatcher  
Certification Scholarship (2014)

I started my flying career later in life than some. At the age of 26, I found my calling and only looked forward. In 2006, I finally felt like my hard work had paid off when I was hired at Comair. As far as regionals go, it was the best in the industry. After three grueling training months, I was living the dream. In late 2009 I went on maternity leave and then was subsequently furloughed. I was recalled two weeks later but lost all my seniority and had a base change from CVG to JFK. I made the difficult choice to resign my position to stay home with my son. I felt that it was important to commit to being a mom.



Two years went by and though I enjoyed watching my son grow, I definitely missed being in the air. If there was a plane flying overhead, I was looking at it from the ground. I decided the best start would be to get involved with my local WAI chapter. Since I made the move to northern Kentucky from my hometown of Miami, Florida, in 2006, I hadn't been active in any group as a new job and then motherhood ruled my time. I met a bunch of wonderful women who loved talking about planes as much as I did and were eager to assist me in getting back into the industry. Through their encouragement and support, I won not one, but two scholarships: one to help me complete my ATP and another in obtaining a dispatcher license. Just winning gave me the courage I needed to get back into the industry.

With a new certificate and license, I was ready to enter the aviation world again. I currently have an amazing job flying part time out of my local executive airport for a private family. This gives me the flexibility to be home with my son and still be in the air. It's important to show him that nothing is impossible. I can't thank WAI enough. It's not just the money, but also the support, encouragement, and empowerment that these scholarships provide that give women the chance to prove to the world that aviation is not a man's world!



## KELLY HOFFMAN

WAI 41529

Redwood City, California

Vicki Cruse Memorial Scholarship (2011)  
Carolyn M. Ford Memorial Scholarship (2012)

I followed a unique path into aviation. I was exposed to aviation at a young age, as both my grandfather and uncle fly with military backgrounds. At family gatherings, it was not uncommon to hop in the back of a Citabria and go





KELLY HOFFMAN

flying. At the time, I considered it to be no different than transportation by car—just a means of getting somewhere. It wasn't until college that this all began to change.

While in my second year at Cal Poly, I found myself searching for a passion as many young adults commonly do. With so many majors and career paths to choose from, making a decision seemed rather

daunting. I was looking for something out of the ordinary. I wanted to prove to myself that I could conquer something big.

My uncle offered to let me spend the summer with him in Texas and suggested I learn to fly. A year prior, he had taken me with him in his Cessna 180 on a flying doctors mission to Mexico and I saw firsthand how critical general aviation is to so many people. I excitedly accepted. That summer was nothing short of the fun promised though with lots of hard work and ground and flight lessons every day. I not only obtained my pilot certificate in a month, but also topped it off with my first trip to Oshkosh.

It wasn't until my attendance at a WAI breakfast held during an AOPA convention that I first encountered Women in Aviation International and truly fell in love with the aviation community. The Women in Aviation scholarship program enticed me to become a member, but it ended up being so much

more than that. The women in WAI were talking so openly about the challenges that they experienced in aviation, which I so appreciated.

Since then, I have become the co-president of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter and have received two scholarships, which have allowed me to build more confidence while reminding me that anything is possible. There is something so special about being awarded a memorial scholarship; it feels like I have a little piece of them with me—something I will carry with me on every flight.

Do not get too fixated on the big scholarships. Keep your options open and go with the scholarship that you connect with most.



## KAREN KALISHEK

WAI 47502

De Pere, Wisconsin

Ride the Sun Scholarship 2014

While working toward a private pilot certificate nine years ago I became consumed by a passion for aviation. I progressed through ratings and am currently a flight instructor. Since I have taught adults as a profession for more than 30 years, transitioning to flight instruction is a natural fit of interests and experience.

The Dare to Dream Scholarship was applied toward upset/aerobatic training, which definitely helped me to become a more well-rounded instructor. Applying for a scholarship is an excellent exercise that is really useful in defining your personal aviation goals.



KAREN KALISHEK



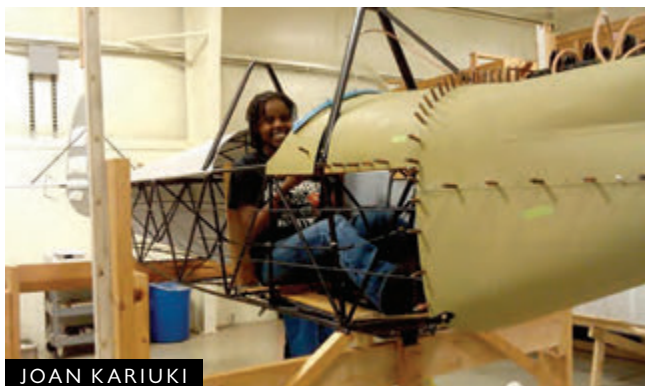
# JOAN KARIUKI

WAI 49941

Dubuque, Iowa

Pratt and Whitney Maintenance Scholarship (2014)

Sporty's Foundation Flight Training Scholarship for Small-Aircraft Maintenance Technician (2014)



**M**y journey in aviation has been very rewarding and the choices I have made have been worthwhile. I dreamed about joining the aviation industry ever since I boarded my first aircraft as a young Girl Scout at the age of 9. That dream brought me all the way from my humble home in Kenya to the United States of America.

My dream of becoming an aircraft mechanic led me to joining an accredited college in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I succeeded in my studies through the guidance of my professors and in participating in several aviation groups. By being involved in groups such as Women in Aviation, Professional Aviation Maintenance Association, and Association for Women in Aviation Maintenance, I have been able to interact and learn from numerous people in the aviation industry.

Five years ago when I first got to this country, starry-eyed and full of dreams, I could not envision the position I find myself in today. I went to Western Michigan University to pursue an aviation maintenance technology degree, and I learned about Women in Aviation and the wonderful opportunities the organization had. I got involved in the community by volunteering at the local aviation history museum, Air Zoo. I worked with some wonderful veterans performing restoration jobs on historical aircraft such as the Heath Parasol, F-84, and T-33. Before I left, the museum received a World War II FM-2 Wildcat that had just been recovered from the bottom of Lake Michigan for restoration.

After graduating from Western Michigan University, I earned an aircraft and powerplant (A&P) certificate and moved to Duluth, Minnesota, to work for AARCorp. While there, I worked on Airbus A319, A320, and A321. One year later, I moved to Dubuque, Iowa, to attend graduate school at the

University of Dubuque, where I am currently in my second year. I have spent the past year working in the aviation department while pursuing a Master's of Business Administration.

Through my participation in WAI, I have applied for and received scholarships that have impacted my life. In 2014, I was awarded the Pratt & Whitney Engine Maintenance Training Scholarship and Sporty's Foundation Flight Training Scholarship. The flight training scholarship was the most unexpected to me. The people at WAI happened to notice my application for a different scholarship and they felt I would qualify for the Sporty's scholarship and forwarded my application to them. This gave me the chance to pursue a lifelong desire of flying. I trained at Superior Flying Services in Superior, Wisconsin, and in three months earned my private pilot certificate.

The past five years have been very rewarding. I can only imagine what will happen in the next 10 years. After completion of my studies in the spring, I hope to secure a job working for a company that supports diversity and values the personal and professional growth of its employees.

I highly recommend applying for as many scholarships as possible. As long as the requirements are met, there should be no reason not to apply. For anyone out there applying for a scholarship, especially those starting out in the industry, besides following the instructions as stated (you don't want to be disqualified for something silly), I find honesty works best. Everyone has a story to tell, so tell yours. You alone can tell it best.

We should all remember that the worst anyone can tell us along our aviation journey is no. It might be hard to hear, but that should never discourage us from going after our dreams. Either way, amazing things are bound to happen when we try.



# MIYUKIKO KOSTELNY

WAI 41327

Flower Mound, Texas

Delta Air Lines Aviation Business Management Scholarship (2010)

Dassault Falcon Scholarship (2012)

Airbus Leadership Award (2013)

Ride the Sun Scholarship (2015)

**T**o say that my life has been impacted greatly by various WAI scholarships is an understatement. I have been extremely blessed to win various scholarships, ranging from academic to flight. All have not only assisted in my completion of degrees and ratings, but also have taught me various life lessons that have allowed me to grow into the person I am today. Through the scholarships, I received inspiration in many ways. I also learned that tenacity and perseverance will get me through challenges and help me accomplish anything I put my mind to.

When I first joined WAI and my university chapter as a college freshman, I had no idea about WAI scholarships un-



KOKO KOSTELNY (right)

til I attended my first conference. I saw many happy women going up on stage for their scholarships. After seeing the utmost excitement from the type rating recipients, I knew I had to apply to scholarships, starting with small ones and working my way up to a type rating.

My very first scholarship was the Delta Air Lines Aviation Business Management Scholarship. This assisted me financially with my double degree. Pursuing a flight degree and a business aviation degree was financially strenuous, so I was very grateful for the opportunity. However, the best part of the scholarship was meeting the scholarship team and many inspiring Delta Air Lines pilots during the International Women in Aviation Conference. I was a sophomore in college working on flight ratings, and with very few female pilots at my university, I was lacking motivation. I was therefore very inspired to see other female pilots that each worked hard to get where they were. The diversity of female pilots was empowering!

Another memorable scholarship that I received was the Airbus Leadership Grant. I had applied to this scholarship for multiple years before receiving it in graduate school. As an undergraduate student, I achieved leadership positions such as WAI chapter president and key officer positions in my sorority. While I listed those positions on my résumé, it wasn't until graduate school that I achieved more leadership roles and felt confident as a leader. About two months before the conference, I got a phone call from Airbus saying that I was one of the final candidates for the scholarship. After a successful phone interview I was awarded the Airbus Leadership Grant. Upon meeting the Airbus team at the conference, I was told that they had noted my résumé in prior applications. To my surprise, they had read my essays in the years prior and watched my résumé improve over time. The belief that others had in me was humbling and motivational at the same time. I had no idea others watched me grow and had hope in me.

In addition to the aforementioned, I was fortunate to have received other scholarships as well, all helping with flight ratings and degrees. However, the most important blessing to come out of these achievements was the courage I received. I gained a strong belief in myself. I gained confidence. I know that I can accomplish anything I put my mind to. At the time of this writing, I am currently in training for a regional airline. Although ground school was mentally fatiguing and simulators are challenging, I know I can accomplish this because I have people that believe in me and I have a wonderful support network. I wouldn't have made it here today if it were not for WAI scholarships. Thank you, WAI and sponsors, for believing in me and helping me achieve my dreams. I wouldn't be here without you.



# ANGELA KOVALESKI

Greenville, North Carolina

Universal Weather & Aviation FAA-Certified Dispatcher Training Scholarship (2013)

I began considering aviation as a possible career path the summer before my senior year of high school. It's that time in everyone's life where you are frequently asked what you will do when you graduate.

One summer day, though, it wasn't about career paths; it was about pancakes. My father took me to the local pancake fly-in at the airport just down the road and for \$30 I was able to go up in a 172 and take my first flight in a small airplane. Nothing could take the smile off my face when we landed, and from there I was hooked. I decided that I wanted to be a pilot and go to college for aviation.

From there I added aviation management to my degree and earned my instrument, commercial, multiengine, and CFI ratings/certificates at Bowling Green State University.

Very shortly after graduation, I started my first position at Delta Private Jets (DPJ) as a flight coordinator. After two years I was promoted to flight control supervisor and have been with DPJ for four years. The vision I had for myself at the pancake fly-in was very much pilot-oriented. I did not envision myself behind a desk watching others live the dream. Despite that, I saw a need to widen my field of opportunity by pursuing an aviation management degree in addition to my pilot certificate. At the time, that did not include a dispatcher certificate.

During my time at DPJ I was looking for ways to advance my career and realized a dispatch certificate would not only give me more knowledge to enhance my decisions in my current position, but also would open a door for possible job opportunities with 121 operators. I heard about WAI scholarships when doing research on funding for my dispatcher certificate.

The scholarship I was granted was the Universal Weather & Aviation Dispatch Course Scholarship. This entitled me to receive my required ground training from Universal teachers in Houston, Texas. That opportunity not only gave me my dispatcher certificate, but also allowed me to meet and network with other people in the industry and help my company train and aid other flight coordinators in getting their dispatcher certificates. My advice to others wanting to obtain a scholarship is to be organized, be patient, and above all else, be honest.

My future is still fluid but my current company is growing. While that can cause some stress, it can also create opportunity, so I am optimistic that there is still room for me to grow with Delta Private Jets. I am also still actively monitoring the dispatcher scene at major airlines. Ultimately, I see myself working for our parent company, Delta Air Lines, in its

dispatch department. Regardless of where I am in 10 years, it will not be without the help of my WAI scholarship and all of the knowledge my dispatcher certificate has given me.



# LAURA LASTER

WAI 11521

Longview, Texas

CL Maintenance/Flight Scholarship (2003)  
Women in Aviation Management Scholarship (2015)

I've been blessed to receive two different scholarships through Women in Aviation International, and they both have shaped me and my career decisions.

The CL Award was designated for flight or maintenance training. At the time, I was a college student and working on completing my commercial multiengine certificate. This scholarship helped me to complete my flight training and



graduate from LeTourneau University in 2004 with no school debt. I began my career as a newly minted flight instructor and spent a year teaching a variety of students, from private to instrument to commercial multiengine pilots. I had attended several Women in Aviation Conferences while at LeTourneau University, which gave me a much broader view of aviation

in general. My attendance allowed me to see that there were more choices for my career than my original goal of becoming an airline pilot.

My career path changed as I left flight instructing to work for Dynamic Aviation. I started there flying King Airs, equipped for airborne survey operations. On one assignment, we flew at 1,500 feet AGL over JFK while conducting a survey of Jamaica Bay to measure the amount of erosion on the East Coast of the United States. I enjoyed this type of flying, but I longed for more of a challenge in my daily work. It was my manager at Dynamic Aviation who eventually steered me into flight department management. I became manager over the survey division of the company, managing the fleet of King Airs assigned to survey operations and associated pilots.

Dynamic Aviation started a certification project to launch Dynamic Airways, a new charter air carrier, in 2009. I quickly joined the team as manager of system operations. I was able to learn an immense amount of information about airline operations while gaining my aircraft dispatcher certificate. I kept very busy during this period of time, starting and managing our dispatch and crew scheduling operations. I left the airline in late 2011 when an opportunity at LeTourneau Uni-



SUSAN MATTACKS

versity became available that was a great fit for my management skills and family needs.

I'm currently the director of flight operations at LeTourneau University. In this role, I manage our day-to-day flight operations, supervising a team of wonderful flight instructors and student workers in support roles. Though I have been an aviation manager for seven years, I have had very little formal training in this area. In 2015, I received the Women in Aviation Management Scholarship. I chose to use this scholarship to attend an aviation management training event held by the National Business Aviation Association. Through the training, I was able to gain valuable hands-on skills and broaden my management worldview. Aviation managers are a small percentage of the aviation industry, but many of us share common challenges. It was very helpful to meet other managers and learn from their personal flight departments' challenges.

The scholarships and the networking opportunities I've received through Women in Aviation International have been invaluable to me in my personal career. At my first conference in 2002, I realized that a whole world of different aviation careers existed beyond what I expected. When I attended in 2014, after a nine-year absence, I found that the conference had been transformed into an amazing networking and hiring event that still included the same "people helping people" feeling that so appealed to me at my first conference. That's

really the connecting theme I've seen through the scholarships I've been privileged to receive: people helping people. I'm motivated to help as many people as I can through my work as an aviation manager every day, and I will continue to keep that as a guiding principal of my life.



## SUSAN MATTACKS

Broadstone, Dorset, United Kingdom  
Diane Endres Ballweg Scholarship (2013)

I received a scholarship of \$500 donated by Mrs. Diane Endres Ballweg and her foundation. As the only U.K. recipient that year, I was totally overwhelmed by the distant generosity of Mrs. Endres Ballweg, by whom my age and spirit was recognized and appreciated. I used the money to fly two dual hours in a HR200 Robin along the Bournemouth coastline, concentrating on navigation skills and RT. At 48, a mother of three, martial arts instructor, and general life enthusiast, I am very appreciative of the kind spirit of some who help others and hope to continue such generosity in my future plans.

I am still in the aviation world, flight planning in a corporate jet management company. I don't intend completing my private pilot certificate until my three daughters happily leave home. Always leave something to look forward to, I say!

Thank you to all involved in the Women in Aviation International and to Mrs. Endres Ballweg, who recognized a kindred spirit.



## HEATHER McNEVIN

WAI 6411  
Northfield, Minnesota  
WAI Achievement Award (2001)  
ProPubs (2001)

I began attending the International Women in Aviation Conference when I was 16 years old with my friend and mentor, Carolyn "Jake" Carlson, also a WAI member. Through all the information and support at the conferences, I was able to chart my path in aviation. The scholarships I received from this organization helped create the ability for me to fly and attend college. I come from a single-parent family and would have had to work and save, and then attend college and flight training in stages as money would have been available.

After I was notified of my scholarships, I didn't tell my mentor so she could be surprised. I used the funds from Women in Corporate Aviation and Women in Aviation to continue work-



HEATHER McNEVIN

ing on my ratings. Though I worked several jobs throughout college, it would have been difficult to continue uninterrupted had I not received the extra assistance.

Since my awards, I have completed my training through CFI/CFII/MEI and have my own flight school. After I opened my school, I was hired by the FAA and became an air traffic control specialist at the Minneapolis Air Route Traffic Control Center. I am an active member of the Local Safety Council and Service Review Team, as well as an on-the-job-training instructor. I have been an FAA safety representative through the Minneapolis FSDO since 2009, and was recently awarded the 2016 District Safety Team Representative of the Year.

I have even been fortunate enough to present at the International Women in Aviation Conference, speaking about ATC.

I have presented my ATC seminar to more than 1,120 pilots. Typically, I present to 12 pilots at a time at Minneapolis Center during my off hours. I am currently one of 13 Master Aviation Educators worldwide, accredited through the National Association of Flight Instructors, and am working on my Master CFI accreditation.

I credit my success to several influences early in my aviation life. I had a wonderful mentor who took me to WAI conferences and helped me learn so much about aviation. She and her husband became family. I was the recipient of many scholarships that helped me get through school and flight training. Now I am able to give back to the aviation community by flying Young Eagles, giving safety seminars, donating flight training, and more.



# LEJA NOE

WAI 7523

Seattle, Washington

Airbus Leadership Grant (2010)

International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISA+21)

B-737 Type Rating (2013)



**A**t the beginning of my career I experienced a couple of stalls. Women in Aviation International helped me apply power and recover. I'm a fortunate recipient of two WAI scholarships: the Airbus Leadership Grant in 2010 and an International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISA+21) B-737 Type Rating Scholarship in 2013. These two scholarships impacted my progress in a huge way, but so did the scholarships I did not win.

My primary stall occurred when my mom became ill and my flight training in the Air Force ended. Once honorably dis-

charged, I was an instrument-rated pilot with a college degree trying to figure out how to make my dream of becoming a professional pilot a reality. Looking for some help, I applied for the Keep Flying Scholarship in 2002. While I did not win, I received mentoring from one of the scholarship's founders, Deborah Hecker. Deborah told me she had a hard time seeing a realistic path from where I was to my career goal. I knew I would succeed, but I took this critique seriously.

With her advice and greater resolve, I devised a clearer plan to realize my goals. I took out a flight training loan and earned my commercial and multiengine ratings. Within two years of applying Deborah's advice, I was flying for Mesa Airlines as a Canadair Regional Jet pilot. I recovered from my initial stall by applying a little WAI power.

While building time at Mesa Airlines, I never forgot Deborah's advice and maintained attitude and direction. I continued to apply for scholarships that would further my career goal; I wanted to become a major airline pilot. I applied to the Delta Air Lines B-737 Type Rating Scholarship at least three times. In one application, I wrote about my experience working in flight operations management during my primary stall: "These jobs introduced me to what I would think of as my airplane, the Boeing 737. I've scheduled revenue flying and training for it, been on new aircraft deliveries, and been a part of technology demonstrations. I want to fly it." I never won, but putting those desires on paper proved to be invaluable.

The secondary stall of my career was a result of a downturn in the industry. There were furloughs, downgrades, and bankruptcies at many carriers. I lost my fourth stripe. While I endured the turbulence, I wanted a new challenge, so I worked on my master's degree in Human Factors. Thankfully, the Airbus Leadership Grant paid for a large portion of my degree.

Seeing an opportunity to apply my master's degree, I volunteered for safety and training programs. My academic focus was on the disparities between commercial pilot flight training and the entry-level airline pilot duties and responsibilities. This provided a unique set of skills and expertise to represent the Air Line Pilots Association on an Aviation Rulemaking Committee for First Officer Qualifications. It was an enormous opportunity for me to give back to the industry, thanks in part to WAI and Airbus.

When the industry finally began to recover, so too did my career. In the course of about a year, I reclaimed my position in the left seat, was awarded the ISA+21 B-737 scholarship, and was hired by a major airline.

Today, I am a Delta Air Lines first officer on the Boeing 737. The power of application is evident to me. Deborah Hecker forced me to put a clear and concise plan on paper. I followed that advice and received exactly what I wanted.

Apply. The power gained is even more than the scholarship awards.



# CYNTHIA M. NORTON

Delta Air Lines Aviation Maintenance/  
Aviation Business Management Scholarship (2013)



CYNTHIA M. NORTON

September 11, 2001, is significant. That day is etched forever in our hearts and soul. Missing planes, damaged buildings, confusion, unimaginable reports and fear. What followed in the days ahead became even more horrific, as the reality unfolded. Our lives as we knew it prior to 9/11 would forever be changed.

September 11, 2005, is significant. That day is etched forever in our hearts and soul. Missing surfer, confusion, unimaginable reports and fear. What followed in the days ahead became even more horrific, as the reality unfolded. Our lives as we knew it prior to 9/11 would forever be changed.

My 18 year-old son and two friends were surfing on Sunday, September 11, 2005. On this day he surfed into the waves of Folly Beach, right into the presence of God.

These are the first few paragraphs of my 1,000-word scholarship essay from 2012. I continued to share how this event changed me, giving me more grace and mercy. Little did I know that the weekend I accepted my scholarship award from Delta Air Lines, would also be life-changing.

I returned from the 2013 conference from Nashville on Sunday, March 17, tired but excited about the incredible International Women in Aviation Conference and basking in the knowledge that I was the recipient of the Delta Business Manager Scholarship. The next night, at approximately 10 p.m.,

my phone rang. My daughter called and frantically told me her husband had been in an accident at work. My son-in-law and I worked in the same building at Boeing in South Carolina. He had been on the job as a “blue badge” or permanent employee for less than a week when the accident occurred. David died 12 days later, leaving behind a wife and two daughters, 14 months and 4 years old.

Our lives as we had known them, once again, changed in a blink of an eye. Unfortunately, I had to drop out of school that semester. All of my professors were understanding and allowed me to take an incomplete and finish up over the summer. It was times like this that I felt I would never complete my lifelong dream of graduating from college.

I missed two semesters of school. By January 2014, I was ready to get back on track. I am happy to say that with the help of my WAI scholarship and my employer, the Boeing Company, I graduated in May 2015. I was promoted due to completing my education, giving me so much more confidence and making me feel like a different person.



# GABRIELLE PALMAS

WAI 19787  
Chandler, Arizona  
Elisha Hall Memorial Scholarship (2014)



GABRIELLE PALMAS

I was so thrilled to find out that I had won the Elisha Hall Memorial scholarship. I immediately reached out to the WAI’s Wright Chapter in Cincinnati to find out more about Elisha and her accomplishments. Most of all, I felt compelled to find out why this was a memorial scholarship. I reached out to Geordie Hall, her father. I found out that she set goals, made plans, adjusted them as needed, and tackled them. It sounds like Elisha and I would have been great friends.

It is an honor to be part of Elisha’s impact on aviation. I thrive on passing my knowledge to others and inspiring today’s generations. Her memorial scholarship came at a time in my life when I was at a standstill in my flight training. I am forever grateful for the inspiration to keep going. The light is



finally at the end of the tunnel in my flight training. I am pursuing a commercial multiengine certification now, in hopes of flying sky divers to build flight hours, something Elisha was doing. I feel her presence and guidance every time I fly.

As I finish a degree in airline operations and pursue another in aviation management, I am reminded how important it is to stay focused and manage your time wisely. There have been the usual struggles of adulthood, now that I am attempting to begin a second career at 28. But I have yet to come across a struggle that has not been solved with input from fellow aviatrixes.

WAI's continued support and encouragement means so much to me. I will do my best to pay it forward when I have the financial means to, and once I am an established commercial airline pilot. I am so fortunate to have found such a wonderful organization of women who support one another in their aviation journey.



## LAUREN PISULA

Stahlstown, Pennsylvania  
United Airlines Pilot Scholarship (2014)



LAUREN PISULA

The WAI scholarship from United Airlines was awarded to me during my final semester at Kent State. I used the scholarship money to finish my multiengine rating, and graduated in August 2014 with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautics.

After graduation, I relocated to Florida where I spent a year flight instructing and building my flight time. I recently moved home to western Pennsylvania and accepted a first officer position, flying a King Air 200 at LJ Aviation.

In addition to helping me finish my education, the scholarship helped me to stand out among applicants when seeking employment. I am grateful that I was awarded this scholarship and I hope to motivate future female pilots.



## CRYSTAL PITTS

WAI 55883  
Keystone Heights, Florida  
Keep Flying Scholarship (2014)



CRYSTAL PITTS

My primary goal in aviation is to become a missionary pilot. At the time of the application for the Keep Flying Scholarship, I had completed a bachelor's degree in Aviation from Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. I was working toward my CFI and came up short with funds. I applied for two scholarships and after a couple of months I received a call telling me that I was a finalist for the Keep Flying Scholarship, but that I would need to come to the International Women in Aviation Conference in Orlando, Florida, for an interview. I thought I would have to drop out because I didn't have the money to pay for the conference or a way to get down there.

I mentioned the subject to my friend and mentor. She started e-mailing people she knew in WAI and before long, she found someone who not only paid for my conference fees but also supplied airline tickets for me to get there. She also found someone I could stay with at the conference. I was able to attend and do the interview. They called me the same day and told me that not only had I won the scholarship, but because they had extra money they were able to give me the exact amount I needed to finish my CFI. I was very grateful and happy.

I was able to use the scholarship to finish my training as a CFI and have been flight instructing for more than a year. I had been working at Henderson for a year as a flight instructor when I heard about the College of Missionary Aviation that had just opened in Florida, and offered a degree in missionary aviation. I visited the school and, after prayerful consideration and the Lord's guidance, decided to start attending. I moved to Keystone Heights, Florida, and have started classes in bible theology. I also flight instruct for the college.

I love it here and I am excited to be working toward becoming a missionary pilot. The classes are challenging, the environment dynamic, and the college growing. If I had not

received the Keep Flying Scholarship, I would not be here today, not only in the pursuit of my goal but also assisting in building a flight school from the ground up.

I have met several people in WAI and have attended the conferences and I enjoy how we share a love for aviation. Thank you Women in Aviation International for everything you have done!



## RICKI RACKER

WAI 29344

Jupiter, Florida

International Society of Women Airline  
Pilots (ISA+21) Scholarship (2014)

Walt Disney said it best: “We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.” You could say that’s how I operate, because looking back, I’ve searched out open doors and run full steam ahead through.

My love story in aviation began 20 years ago with my father. Every Sunday was our day to run down to the airport and go fly in his 1989 Mooney 252.

Up for breakfast, out to a friend’s house, or just a scenic trip around—those were the best of times! Aside from the fun of spending time with my dad, I caught the aviation bug.

When I was 15, my neighbors purchased a local flight school, just about paving the way for me to start official flight lessons. They gave me a job to help pay for the lessons, and by my 16th birthday I was able to solo, earning my private pilot certificate just a year later! While all of my classmates were hanging out after school, I was rushing over to the airport, working as hard as I could, and flying as much as I could. Before I even graduated high school I worked my way through my instrument, commercial, multi, and tailwheel endorsement, always moving forward and opening new doors.

In 2007, a fellow CFI told me about Women in Aviation International and how it offers scholarships to help pilots further their training and pursue their dreams. That year was the first conference I attended, and both my dad and I became members. This presented another door in front of me, so I began to apply for scholarships religiously every year.

I attended the University of Florida and earned a Bachelor’s of Science in Telecommunication with a minor in business, all while working at two different charters and doing some flight



RICKI RACKER

instruction on the side. I did whatever I could to get up in the air or at least be at the airport. Fast forward a few years, I was instructing and working up to the magic 1,500-hour mark so I could join the ranks of the airlines, but was falling short. That’s when my life changed forever with just one phone call.

The call was from WAI, letting me know I had been awarded the scholarship for an MEI rating. This opportunity not only helped me finish out my instructor ratings, but also helped me get those precious multiengine hours, pushing me right up to my 1,500 hours. This was a turning point in my life.

Equipped with the hours I needed, I was offered and accepted a first officer position with PSA Airlines and have since earned my ATP rating and have been typed in the CRJ 200/700/900. Looking back at how I got to where I am today, flying jets on a daily basis, I’m forever grateful for WAI and its support in getting me here. To anyone looking ahead to the future, it’s scholarships like the one I received that help us all push forward. My dreams continue to come true, and it’s thanks to family, friends, and wonderful organizations like Women in Aviation International that help me and others open new doors. Always remember that the sky is not the limit, it’s where we all belong!



# SAMANTHA REED

WAI 60716

Valparaiso, Indiana

AOPA Student Pilot Scholarship (2015)

When I applied for this scholarship, I never thought I would be able to say that it changed my life. I didn't think I had what it took to actually receive a scholarship. But, compelled by the expense of flying and my own empty bank account, I filled out the application and sent it in. Weeks later, I was in the process of leaving my dorm room to go jogging when I received a phone call that proved me wrong—I couldn't believe it.

The monetary assistance in itself was enough to ensure my return to Liberty University School of Aeronautics. I would have been very grateful for that alone, but the WAI/AOPA scholarship team was generous enough to offer to pay for most of my travel expenses to ensure that I could be at the

annual International Women in Aviation Conference in Dallas to accept the scholarship in person. It was the chance of a lifetime. I approached the leadership at the Liberty University School of Aeronautics about my scholarship and the travel expenses necessary, and they were generous enough to cover the remainder of my expenses (and they even sent a CFI with me). Before I knew it, I was on an Airbus to DFW.

The conference was a whirlwind of pilots, connections, classes, speakers, forums, pamphlets, and the best swag I've ever seen. I even got the chance to meet the incredible Dr. Peggy Chabrian, who, thanks to our encounter, will be speaking at the Liberty School of Aeronautics sometime next year. I enjoyed the whole experience immensely and I learned an incredible amount about airplanes, networking, and my own character. A huge thank-you is in order for everyone who made this happen. The scholarship was worth \$3,000, but the experience was priceless.

I would encourage every pilot in need of funding to apply for scholarships. They seem impossible, but I promise they aren't as out of reach as they seem. Thanks to some very generous people whom I hardly know, I am one step closer to becoming a missionary pilot. Put yourself out there and you may be surprised at what happens.



SAMANTHA REED



# DR. EMILY ROBACK

Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
Wings Over 35 Scholarship (2014)



DR. EMILY ROBACK

I have a profound sensory neural hearing loss bilaterally and work as a chiropractor at LCP Health in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, and as a business owner at Iron Mountain Integrative Health in Calgary, Alberta. My niche market has always been aviation, with a special interest in working with the Canadian and United States Air Force military pilots. I have always wanted

to be a private helicopter pilot, so I purchased a \$3,000 com-pilot hearing aid set, and a Bose headset to help me overcome my hearing impairment and pass my medical and radio evaluations. My goal is to enroll in a flight course and work hard

to earn my private helicopter pilot certificate by August 2016. Upon graduation, I will be applying for a research grant that will allow me to fly to remote areas to study the effects of rotary systems on spinal diseases.

I received the Wings Over 35 Scholarship from Women in Aviation International in 2014, which helped me with the funds that I needed to acquire my restricted operator certificate. I am very grateful for the opportunity that the generosity has provided me. Organizations like Women in Aviation International make it possible for professionals like me to afford a quality flight education during these difficult economic times.



# SANDRINE ROHRER

WAI 40912  
Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland  
WAI Enthusiasm Scholarship (2013)

I discovered WAI in 2008, during EBACE, where I worked as a hostess. I decided to join WAI, and was invited to be a speaker during the European conference in Sandefjord.

It was the beginning of the adventure. Year after year, I took part in the European conferences, held in Ferrara, London, and Amsterdam. In 2010, I became confident enough



SANDRINE ROHRER

to attend the international conference in Orlando. It was so amazing that I decided to come back for the conference in Reno in 2011, as well as apply for a 2013 scholarship, to be presented in Nashville just after the birth of my son in 2012, and the creation of the first Swiss WAI chapter.

Already being a private pilot, and not being involved in the aviation industry, I decided to apply for a new scholarship: the WAI Enthusiast Award. I was so proud and excited to learn that I'd been chosen.

For me, it was a huge reward, and proof that WAI is a world-wide association, recognizing all members equally, including international and "little people" of aviation. It was, for me, the most beautiful way to tell me, "Good job. We believe in you."

Since then, I've been working toward growing the Edelweiss Chapter, and creating the Swiss conference day. I've had my second child very recently, but plan to fly again very soon, aboard my beautiful antique airplane. I hope to be able to attend the conference in Nashville again, as I love to attend the conferences, but especially because it's where I received my scholarship.

Thank you WAI for your support, but also for inspiring me, as well as providing me with ideas and resources to promote women and teenagers to go into aviation in Switzerland.



## FATIMA SHAFI

WAI 44827

New York, New York

Delta Air Lines Boeing 757/767 Type Rating Certificate  
Scholarship (2015)

Through WAI and Delta Air Lines, I recently won and completed a Boeing 777 type rating. A WAI member since 2008, this was the third time I applied for a scholarship but the first time I was successful. What made all the difference, I believe, was how I put my application together. The most important elements are the reference letters and the essay. If done right, the two elements can make you stand out. I would recommend one personal and one professional letter that elaborate on your pilot abilities. I highly recommend having one of the two letters being written by a current employee of the airline that is sponsoring the scholarship.

Writing the essay is not easy, but very important if you want to be successful.

I spent about three months perfecting my essay, and had multiple co-workers and friends vet it and help me make improvements. My essay explained me so well that at the WAI award ceremony, instead of using my bio, an excerpt from my essay was read. When writing my essay, I wished I could have seen an essay of a previous scholarship winner to have an idea of where to begin. I am including below a part of my essay as a sample to help future scholarship applicants in creating their masterpiece.



Growing up as a little girl in Pakistan, I was raised in a very shielded and confined environment. I was told, "girls don't," "girls can't," and "girls shouldn't." I didn't know any other option existed.

How I evaded the tradition of getting married in my teens, complete an engineering degree and become an officer in Pakistan Air Force, involved many twists and turns, very painful at the time and very memorable now.

They doubted me; they were convinced I couldn't do it. The more certain they became of my anxiously anticipated failure, the more certain I became of the aviator and the woman inside me who knew no boundaries.

They required I sit in an office like my predecessors; I wanted to perform commensurate to my rank and occupation. I wanted to touch the dihedral of wings, smell the smokiness of jet blast and feel the thunder of afterburners. I had to step out of the office, put on a flight-suit, and work on a flight line. The shackles of culture had to be broken and they were in unrivalled ways. I became the first female engineer in Pakistan to work in a fighter squadron, fly in an F-16 and attend Airborne School.

These achievements came with a cost. In a culture where women are required to stay covered, protected and isolated, I was interacting with men, launching fighter jets on combat missions, and running a flight line. Instead of being encouraged I was shunned as I had brought disgrace upon women.

In 2008, I immigrated to the U.S. to become a pilot but more importantly pursue aviation without disgrace, disrepute, rid-

icule and resentment. I arrived in this land of the free with two suitcases, but I had a goal and I had determination.

This scholarship and the type rating it provides will give me the opportunity to continue a dream that began as a little girl in Pakistan. “Girl’s don’t.” “Girls can’t.” “Girls shouldn’t.” Well, this girl *did* and now she wants to do even more and your scholarship will help me do it.



## SIVAN SOLOMON

Daytona Beach, Florida  
United Airlines Pilot Scholarship (2014)

**M**y journey to a career in aviation began in 2009, with a discovery flight from North Perry Airport (KHOW) in a Cessna 172. Shortly after my very first flight, I enrolled into ATP flight school in Florida to obtain my private pilot certificate. Later, in 2010, I also added instrument and multiengine commercial ratings. Flying brought



SIVAN SOLOMON

me so much joy that I began to consider pursuing a career in aviation. I was interested in receiving a degree, which led me to enroll into the aeronautics program at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

As a female in the industry, I felt the need to join an organization that shares

the same dreams and struggle as I experienced. In 2013, I attended the 24th Annual International Women in Aviation Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. This event completely transformed my life. I became better educated on various aviation topics, gained friends, and networked among professionals. However, it was at the awards banquet that I recognized the potential to become a scholarship recipient. My passion for aviation and my dedication was recognized by United Airlines, and in 2014 I received the United Airlines Pilot Scholarship.

In addition to the scholarship, United Airlines invited me to attend my second WAI conference, held at Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida. This conference was even more special to me than the first one as my story was shared with all in attendance at the banquet. I felt excited, as well proud to be recognized for my accomplishments. Thanks to receiving the United Airlines scholarship, I was able to continue pursuing an aviation career. I have completed most of my classes, and anticipate graduating in the summer of 2016.

In addition to being a full-time student, I landed a job

with Western Global Airlines as a load-planner. I am a crew-member who flies with the aircraft overseas, manage the load and offload of the cargo, calculate the weight and balance, and supervise ground handling. While my goal to become an airline pilot has not become a reality yet, I fully appreciate flying with the crew in the cockpit and being able to be active in the aviation industry.

My advice to others is to follow your dreams. Life may take you on different paths, but in turn, you may discover endless aviation opportunities that open your mind to new possibilities!



## ASHLEY TAYLOR

WAI 62127  
McCall, Idaho  
Lt. Valerie Cappelaere Delaney Memorial Scholarship (2015)  
Virginia Volk Memorial Scholarship (2015)

**I** am beyond fortunate to have received two scholarships through Women in Aviation International. I began researching a way to start my goal of becoming a pilot in 2014. As I searched and spoke to many pilots, I learned it was a long and challenging road, not only in learning to fly and completing my private pilot checkride, but as most people find, making it work financially.

I am a permanent seasonal employee with the U.S. Forest Service as a smokejumper. A smokejumper is a wildland firefighter who jumps out of fixed-wing airplanes into remote fires to put them out. This fueled my passion for aviation and sparked my pursuit to fly. After two seasons of working as a smokejumper, it became clear that behind the controls of an airplane was where I wanted to be. I don’t want to stop at my private pilot certificate. My goal is to become a smokejumper pilot and fill a unique role that combines firefighting experience and pilot training.

I received the Lt. Valerie Cappelaere Delaney Memorial Scholarship and the Virginia Volk Memorial Scholarship. Both of these scholarships are in memory of two amazing women and I could not have been more honored. The impact of winning these scholarships has been significant and something I will never forget.

Lt. Valerie Cappelaere Delaney’s mother, Doreen, called me to tell me I had received her daughter’s scholarship and she hoped I would be able to come to Dallas to accept it from her personally—a request I could not turn down. I flew to Dallas for the International Women in Aviation Conference where I met Doreen, her best friend Ceecee, and last year’s recipient of the scholarship, Chelsea Atwater. We had an amazing weekend learning about Valerie, getting to know each other, and mingling with other conference attendees.

Much to my surprise, while at the conference I learned I had received a second scholarship. The award was in honor of Virginia Volk, who joined the FAA in 1982. She worked there



COURTESY OF ASHLEY TAYLOR, PROPERTY OF THE US GOVERNMENT

ASHLEY TAYLOR

for 32 years, including 25 as an air traffic control specialist. Her friend, James (J.J.) Johnson, presented the scholarship, and I had the honor of getting to sit down with J.J. and learn more about Virginia, who had unfortunately passed away in April 2014 after a courageous three-year battle with cancer.

I could not have imagined being fortunate enough to represent two amazing women who have both forged a spot for women in aviation. To also meet the people who knew them

and inspire me and others through their memory was an incredible bonus.

In April 2015 I finished my private pilot certificate right as I started work as a smoke-jumper for the season. Being able to get my certificate before the wildland fire season began was a huge accomplishment, something I would not have been able to do without the generous gift I received from these two scholarships. Valerie and Virginia's memories live on, and the sacrifices they made open doors and inspire people like me.



## SONIA THIEBEAU

WAI 46392

Avondale, Arizona

American Airlines Aircraft

Maintenance Technology (2013)

I was very fortunate and grateful to have been awarded a \$5,000 scholarship from American Airlines for maintenance training in 2013. Without this scholarship and WAI, I am confident that I wouldn't be where I am today.

I became interested in aviation at a young age after taking my first flight in a small aircraft. I knew at that point that I wanted to be a pilot, and a passion for aviation has remained with me ever since. I started ground school and flying lessons around age 14, but was unable to finish due to financial issues. I graduated

from high school a year early and then life happened. I got married at age 21 and the same year started an auto body business with my husband. Living in small-town Iowa didn't allow for much opportunity in aviation, so I pushed my passion to the side to make a life and a successful business. At 25 we divorced, and it was then that I decided to follow my dreams.

Since I had spent several years working on cars—which I



SONIA THIEBEAU

enjoyed—I decided to pursue aircraft maintenance. I moved to Council Bluffs, Iowa, to start A&P school, but before classes began I received a full-ride scholarship to Spartan College in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for avionics. So, off to Tulsa I went. Along the way I met my current husband, and he decided to move to Tulsa with me. We got married in June 2012, and a few months later I became pregnant with our first child.

In November 2012, I graduated with honors from Spartan. The following month, I started airframe training at Tulsa Tech at night, while working full time at Lufthansa Technik as a pneumatics technician during the day. This continued throughout my eight-and-a-half-month pregnancy. I took my generals exam two days before my son was born and returned to school a week after, with my newborn son, so I didn't miss too much class time.

In January 2013, I was flown to Chicago by American Airlines as one of the finalists chosen for the company's maintenance scholarship through WAI. I was extremely excited when I found out they had chosen me as the recipient. American Airlines flew me out to the International Women in Aviation Conference that March to be presented with the award. I was so pleased to be able to network with some great people there including American Airlines Vice President of Base Maintenance Bill Collins.

When searching for my dream job in spring 2013, I noticed an avionics position open at US Airways in Phoenix. I applied, but not having my A&P certificate yet prevented me from receiving the position.

In September 2013, I proudly graduated and received my airframe certificate. A few months later, I was able to get

signed off for my powerplant certificate through Lufthansa and received my full A&P certificate in December 2013.

I reapplied to US Airways after getting my airframe certificate. Upon resubmitting my application I contacted Bill Collins, knowing that US Airways and American Airlines were starting a merger. In the meantime, I was offered an avionics position with a maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility in Jacksonville, Florida. We planned to move to Jacksonville in December, but a couple weeks later I received an e-mail back from Bill Collins who recommended me to a manager from US Airways. They called me back shortly after and before I knew it, in November I was interviewing for the avionics position in Phoenix! I was visiting family in Iowa over Thanksgiving weekend when I got a call and was offered the job. Goodbye Jacksonville, hello Phoenix!

We moved from Tulsa to Phoenix in December of 2013, and I started my job with US Airways in January 2014. I feel so blessed to be where I am now and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. It's a great feeling to love going to my job every day, and it's so rewarding to watch our aircraft take off after fixing them. Yes—I still look up at airplanes! They still amaze me every day. And when my son says, "Look Mommy, airpwane!" it makes my heart melt.

This year, I was able to volunteer for the scholarship committee for American Airlines' maintenance scholarship. It was really enjoyable being on the "other side" and helping someone else succeed with their dreams and goals. I helped represent our maintenance team at the American Airlines booth at the conference and especially loved being able to mentor others who were in school and nervous about entering this industry.

I urge anyone to apply for as many scholarships as possible. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Not just for the money, but also for the networking opportunities that go along with it. You never know, the next person you talk to might be your future employer. Always act professionally and don't be afraid to show your passion and ask questions!



## SUSAN TUDDENHAM

WAI 45950

Reading, Berkshire, United Kingdom

Women in Aviation Achievement Award (2012)

Dare to Dream Scholarship (2014)

After just one flying lesson, I was totally hooked and determined to become a professional pilot. Working hard to raise funds for further training, I was able to complete my private pilot certificate at Booker Airfield, England. I then built hours as a volunteer tug pilot for Booker Gliding Club, towing gliders in its Super Cub and Robin. This training gave me a fondness for taildraggers and inspired my love of aerobatics, as I spent all my aero-tow credits having





SUSAN TUDDENHAM

lots of fun upside down in gliders. Soon afterward, and with the assistance of savings, scholarships, and loans, I completed my commercial pilot certificate, multiengine rating, and instrument rating together with a multi-crew cooperation course, leading to a frozen airline transport pilot certificate in early 2013. While saving for further training, I worked as an apprentice in a workshop, re-fabricating vintage airplanes and later instructing members of the public on a Boeing 737-800 simulator.

In February 2014, I was absolutely ecstatic to be awarded the Women in Aviation International Dare to Dream Scholarship, helping me to achieve the next step in my flying career by providing funding toward a flight instructor course. Then, just before starting this training, came news of a dream job offer, flying a Citation XLS for a business jet company based in London. It was an offer I couldn't refuse. The Dare to Dream Scholarship committee granted an exception under these unusual circumstances to allow the funds to be used instead toward the XLS type rating. Having only been given a week before the course started to raise the capital, this was fantastic news!

A year has passed since receiving my scholarship, and I have flown clients across 16 different countries and 70 European cities, building 450 hours multiengine jet and crew time. I am therefore extremely grateful for the help and support Women in Aviation International and the Dare to Dream Foundation have provided, without which I wouldn't have been able to pursue my dream.



## LYNN DeLEAN-WEBER

Marthasville, Missouri

2013 Ted Mallory Memorial Scholarship Recipient

**M**y story is not unlike that of many women who fly, I suspect. I worked professionally for 35 years while raising our family. The desire to learn to fly start-

ed taking shape a long time ago, but with no real means or time to pursue it. The dream became dust-covered while I turned my focus to helping my children and husband in all of their interests and pursuits.

Over the years, I found ways to keep the dream alive. I attended four EAA AirVentures and had a complete blast. The first year I accompanied my husband thinking, "This will be interesting seeing cool planes up close and enjoying the air show." The actual experience was far more than that. I fell in love with those remarkable warbirds, particularly the P-51s and the Corsairs. I listened and talked to people who have made aviation history. Among them are the Doolittle Raiders, a Red Tail pilot, the WASP of World War II, Burt Rutan, Yves Rossy, and Patty Wagstaff. Each summer, I returned home more energized than before and committed to taking another step, albeit small, toward my goal. I joined WAI, the Ninety-Nines, and our local EAA chapter in Troy, Missouri, and found enthusiastic support from fellow pilots.

When I applied for the Ted Mallory Memorial Scholarship through WAI in 2013, I had just started taking lessons toward obtaining my private pilot certificate. I was honored to be selected as the recipient that year. The monetary scholarship also included a set of reference materials that I still use today. The award created a sense of purpose and momentum to keep going for the goal I had created for myself: to earn my private pilot certificate, start to finish, in a tail-dragger.

A year ago we purchased a Piper Colt converted to a tail-dragger. As soon as it is airworthy, I will resume my lessons. It is the plane I will solo in. That possibility is what keeps me going. I have a great instructor whose patience and approach continue to build my confidence in the cockpit. My husband, also a pilot, has encouraged me on every step of this journey.

Today I have the good fortune to enjoy two careers. The first is as a Montessori teacher whose days are filled with



LYNN DeLEAN-WEBER

young children exploring and discovering. The second is as the CEO/owner of about-to-be-launched Edelbrand Pure Distilling, producing artisanal European-styled spirits from single-batch copper pot stills.

I see a lot of parallels between flying, teaching, and distilling. There's an art and a science to doing each of them well. And you never stop learning, no matter how long you've been at it. Finally, you join a community of great folks who are willing to share their enthusiasm and knowledge at the drop of a hat. That's a fantastic combination that keeps me motivated and moving forward.



ELIZABETH WORSHAM



## ELIZABETH WORSHAM

WAI 57546

Loveland, Ohio

**American Airlines/Envoy Engineering Scholarship (2015)**

**Boeing Career Enhancement Scholarship (2015)**

I was greatly honored to be awarded the Boeing Career Enhancement and American Airlines Engineering scholarships through Women in Aviation International. These scholarships were an affirmation of my achievements throughout my education, and are helping me to further my passion for aviation and my career.

My interest in aviation began during a summer internship at NASA's Glenn Research Center in 2011. I worked in

the GreenLab, studying salt-tolerant plants for aviation bio-fuels. I was in awe of how much fuel an airplane consumed, and combined with my interests in weather and climate change, I knew that I wanted to solve that problem someday. This drive grew when I took thermodynamics, becoming fascinated with engines and the idea that one could never achieve 100 percent efficiency. Since then, I've made it my goal to work with power on multiple levels to create a more efficient future.

For my career, I am open to every opportunity that I receive, and make the most of what I learn. In 2015 I interned at the Boeing Company and completed my third co-op rotation at Rolls-Royce. After graduation, I plan to continue working in the aerospace industry to increase efficiency, reduce fuel consumption, and find new ways to power the sky. However, I do plan to stay at Embry-Riddle for my master's degree. Eventually, I hope to earn my Ph.D. so that I can focus on research. Thanks to being awarded this scholarship, I will be able to continue on my path to higher education.



At the close of the 27th annual  
International Women in Aviation Conference  
in 2016, we will have awarded more than  
\$10 million in scholarships  
and celebrated another exciting year  
of empowering WAI members to  
live their aviation dreams  
and achieve their incredible goals.

Around the world,  
WAI scholarship winners are making a  
difference and reaching back to lend a hand  
to those following in their path.

Congratulations  
to our scholarship recipients  
—past, present, and future—  
we can't wait to see where  
your journey takes you.



## SCHOLARSHIP SPONSORS 1996-2016

The Women in Aviation International scholarship program exists because of the passion WAI founding board members had in creating opportunity for its dynamic membership, and the incredible generosity of hundreds of industry partners who know their investment in a WAI member today can greatly change the face of aviation tomorrow.

By funding scholarship opportunities over these last 20 years, these sponsors have inspired and empowered thousands to achieve their dreams and make their own lasting and powerful contributions to the industry.

And for that,  
we could not be more thankful.

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IN CELEBRATION OF 20 YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS.

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EDITOR **KELLY NELSON**

ASSISTANT EDITOR **HANNAH KUENZI**

ART DIRECTOR **NANCY BINK**



Morningstar Airport • 3647 State Route 503 South • West Alexandria, OH 45381  
phone: 937-839-4647 • fax: 937-839-4645 • info@wai.org • www.WAI.org