

WAI2020 CONFERENCE PROGRAM INSIDE

AviationforWomen

MARCH/APRIL 2020

The official publication of Women in Aviation International®

WAI2020 SPEAKER

EILEEN
COLLINS



DEFINING
WORKFORCE
ISSUES

WAI HAS A NEW CEO:
ALLISON MCKAY

Contents

AVIATION FOR WOMEN
MARCH/APRIL 2020

Features

16

WORKFORCE REPORT

The latest WAI member survey identifies key factors affecting the greatest gender gaps.

by *Becky Lutte, Ph.D.*

18

EILEEN COLLINS

Homemade checklists helped this NASA astronaut manage work and family while balancing a public and private life.

by *Kelly Murphy*



62

TAKING THE UNTRADITIONAL PATH

Nurse turned pilot, Denise Waye provides critical care services in the air.

Compiled by *Bryce Nelson*



66

DISBANDED! THE END OF THE WASP

Determined WWII female pilots teach generations about generosity and grit.

by *Katherine Sharp Landdeck, Ph.D.*



DISNEY'S CORONADO SPRINGS RESORT
March 5-7, 2020

21

WAI2020 CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Ready. Set. Go. Check out the 40-page guide to WAI2020 in central Florida.

Columns

70

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS: NEW ZEALAND

IATA has launched a voluntary 25by2025 campaign to advance gender diversity at airlines. Air New Zealand has been quick to support this diversity and inclusion effort.

by *Abigail Welch*

72

TIPS FROM A CFI

Don't underestimate the importance of networking at industry gatherings.

by *Meg Godlewski*

74

IN THE PUSH

What's your take on the crew lounge? Relaxing or stressful?

by *Devan Norris*

76

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

In our Best of Pat series, learn about the value of listening to others.

by *Patricia Luebke*

Departments

2

FROM THE CEO

4

EDITOR'S LETTER

6

WAI NEWS

8

WAI CHAPTERS

14

WAI MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



78

THE WAY WE WERE

Women of Britain

79

MEMBER CENTRAL

80

IN OUR OWN WORDS: WHAT'S YOUR GO-AROUND?

A missed approach in life might lead to a second chance or a new perspective.

by *Stephanie Goetz*

On the Cover

Famed photographer Annie Leibovitz shot this dramatic image of Eileen Collins in February 1999 at Ellington Field, Houston, Texas. Just five months later, Eileen commanded STC-93 Columbia, July 23-27, as the first female shuttle commander. Photo: Annie Leibovitz/Trunk Archive

Allison McKay

Publisher

Kelly Murphy

Editor-in-Chief

Nancy Bink

Senior Art Director

Meghan Plummer

Proofreader

Abigail Welch

Publications Intern

Columnists

Meg Godlewski

Patricia Luebke

Devan Norris

Contributors

Stephanie Goetz

Katherine Landdeck, Ph.D.

Becky Lutte, Ph.D.

Bryce Nelson

www.WAI.org



Aviation for Women, (ISSN 1525-7762), Volume 23, Number 2, is published bimonthly by Women in Aviation International, 3647 S.R. 503 South, West Alexandria, OH 45381; Tel. 937-839-4647; Fax 937-839-4645. Reproduction by any means in whole or in part of any copy, photograph, or illustration without written permission from the publisher is prohibited. Periodicals postage paid at West Alexandria, OH, and additional mailing office. Postmaster: Send address changes to Women in Aviation International, 3647 S.R. 503 South, West Alexandria, OH 45381. Canadian Publications Agreement No. 400-42-433; Canadian return address: Station A, P.O. Box 54, Windsor, ON, N9A 6J8; E-mail: cpcreturns@waisnmail.com Membership dues include *Aviation for Women* subscription valued at \$34/year. Non-member subscription rates: Domestic-\$34/year; Outside the U.S.-\$44/year Single copies-\$6.00

PRINTED IN U.S.A.



is the official publication of Women in Aviation International. Women in Aviation International® is a registered trademark of Women in Aviation International.

A close-up photograph of the front section of a white aircraft, likely a Cessna 172. The image shows the cockpit windows, the nose, and the front landing gear. The aircraft is parked inside a hangar with a wooden floor and a metal door in the background. The lighting is bright, reflecting off the white paint of the plane.

TAKING
THE
Untraditio
PATH



Nurse turned pilot, Denise Waye provides critical care services in the air

COMPILED BY
BRYCE NELSON

Combining her love of nursing with aviation, 15 years ago Denise Waye, WAI 78982, was determined to start her own air ambulance provider with a foundation built on safe operations. Denise is dedicated to providing patient care with empathy and compassion. She draws on her experiences as a mother of five children and a driven entrepreneur who established AirCARE1, a 100% woman-owned company.

What prompted you to start AirCARE1 in 2004?

I am the mother of five children. After the birth of my fifth child, I had an unpleasant experience with the nurse who was assigned to me in the hospital. From that experience, I decided I wanted to become a nurse to help other people avoid the kind of experience I had received. Shortly after, I went back to nursing school.

Over the course of five years, I graduated with honors with my Bachelor of Science in nursing. I became a critical care nurse working in the intensive care units specializing in cardiac care. I later started working in the emergency room where a person who worked at a long-range, fixed-wing air ambulance company approached me. I interviewed and was hired to what I considered my dream job. I had always loved aviation, having wanted to become a pilot or flight attendant on an airline when I was younger. However, I got married, which diverted my path.

This dream job of becoming a flight nurse presented an amazing opportunity to combine my love of

Becoming a pilot was one of the best things I could have done, as this allowed me to understand and navigate the aviation portion of AirCARE1.

nursing with aviation. As a flight nurse, I was so enthralled flying to both domestic and international destinations while transporting patients that I wanted to learn how to fly.

I began taking flying lessons and became a private pilot. One of the reasons I wanted to become a pilot was to be able to explain the flying process to my patients. It was one of the best things I could have done, as this allowed me to understand and navigate the aviation portion of AirCARE1.

Being a pilot as well as a nurse gave me a strong foundation for founding AirCARE1. As the president of the company, I have been able to make sound aviation decisions based on my knowledge as a pilot (as well as sound medical decisions from my medical training).

Although I dearly loved my job at the air ambulance company I worked for, I had concerns with some of their safety practices. I went to the owners of the company and expressed my concerns, only to be told, “When you own your own company, you can do whatever you want—until then, we will do it our way.”

So, in 2004, with my business partner (a pilot), I founded Critical Air Response Enterprises, LLC, dba AirCARE1. We are an air ambulance provider that transports our patients in executive-quality Learjets in a pleasant medical environment throughout North, Central, and South America with wing-to-wing collaborations to worldwide destinations.

As a nurse, my passion is to provide care with empathy and compassion to make a difference in the lives of our patients as we help with the healing process through a holistic approach to our patient care. In order to reduce the stressors of flight, we provide our patients with noise-cancelling headsets with therapeutic music along with hand massages with aromatherapy. This passion has continued on at AirCARE1 throughout the years.

We established our first base of operations with a Learjet 35A in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and expanded to Phoenix, Arizona, with another Learjet 35A in 2007. In 2014, I bought out my business partner and AirCARE1 became a 100% woman-owned company (WBENC certified).

What challenges have you faced and overcome to start this new business?

Starting a business was definitely not easy. Here we were, a nurse and a pilot who had no significant collateral to start an air ambulance service. We made presentations to many lending institutions, only to be turned away. We finally found a team at a local bank who believed

in us and provided us with the working capital to start our company along with our own personal investments to the company (which included putting our homes and everything on the line).

The challenge was finding the right personnel on both the medical and aviation sides with the same vision and passion we have. This job isn't all about the money (although that is important), but realizing the impact we have on the lives of our patients and their family members. Our operations are nonscheduled/on-demand, which can be another challenge.

Being a female entrepreneur in a male-dominated industry was always a challenge. Everyone always underestimated my capabilities, which actually became a plus. I was able to manage to stay under the radar for years as I quietly grew my company. I was able to establish a great market presence as I developed strong and loyal clients.

Who have been your mentors or role models along the way?

Since I was in somewhat new territory for a female entrepreneur in the air ambulance industry, I never really had the luxury of having a mentor or role model. However, I always thought Amelia Earhart was really cool as she had the confidence to fly around the world into pretty much unknown territory. Her example gave me confidence that I too could venture into unknown territory.

While I really didn't have a mentor or role model per se, I would love to give back to the aviation industry and become a mentor to women in aviation. I know how hard it can be. I grew up in an era where there were not that many women in aviation. I'm always thrilled when I see a female captain or first officer on a commercial airliner (or a female astronaut)!

How many employees do you have currently? And are there many women working for you?

In 2004, AirCARE1 started with one leased Learjet 35A and three full-time employees. In 2019, AirCARE1 has grown to five company-owned aircraft—three Learjet 35As, one Learjet 36A, and one Learjet 60—and over 95 employees.

We have many female employees who work at AirCARE1 in the office, as nurses and pilots. We always love to hire qualified female pilots to join our company.

What advice would you share with our Aviation for Women readers based on your own personal journey?

Just because it's hard, it doesn't mean you

During the past 15 years, Denise has steadily grown the company with plans to upgrade the fleet to Learjet 60s. The newer aircraft will offer patients and their family members more comfortable longer-range flights.

can't do it. If you really believe in something, follow your dream. There will be many naysayers who will tell you something can't be done, but say to yourself, "Just watch me! I can do this!" Of course, there is a lot of work involved, some of it is a little luck, but I believe if you prepare, you will make your own luck happen. Find people who can be a resource to you and ask a lot of questions including the second- and third-tier questions. Be honest, be kind, and be humble.

What are your future growth plans for AirCARE1 and why?

One of my employees told me he wanted to see AirCARE1 grow bigger. My response was, "I always want to grow better." When you continue to grow better, you will indeed grow bigger as this is a natural progression.

Our growth plans include phasing out our Learjet 35/36As as we purchase and upgrade to Learjet 60s. While the Learjet 35/36s are amazing aircraft for the air ambulance industry, they are an aging aircraft. We wanted to get ahead of the curve and start upgrading now. In the air ambulance industry, it is usually not practical to buy the newest aircraft on the market due to the cost as well as the pricing structure to our clients. We chose an aircraft with a longer range as well as having a stand-up cabin and lavatory for the comfort of our patients and their family members.

We are also working toward our worldwide operations specifications and hope to receive approval in the spring/summer of 2020. This will extend our reach to transport our patients worldwide, and provide them with comfort and peace of mind during their transport.

We continue to grow our commercial escort division (transporting stable but medically compromised patients on commercial airlines with a medical escort), as well as establishing a ground ambulance to transport our patients in the Phoenix area. Our growth is made possible by the loyal support of our clients to whom we are grateful. 

Bryce Nelson is the business development director for AirCARE1 at its headquarters in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

