



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

AMELIA M. EARHART

Amelia M. Earhart

Amelia Earhart was born July 24, 1898 at the home of her grandparents in Atchison, Kansas. As a child, Amelia was an irrepressible tomboy. "I was a horrid little girl," she said about staying with her grandparents, "and I do not see how they put up with me, even part time." A harsh judgment upon herself, but she did cause her mother and grandmother many moments of fret and anxiety about her unorthodox behavior. She and her sister loved to play football, basketball and baseball.

In 1907 her family moved to Des Moines, Iowa, and she saw her first airplane. She remembered the exact day she saw the plane; it was at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, on July 24, her ninth birthday. Later, Amelia remembered looking beyond the fence to the airplane. She thought it was an ugly thing of rusty wire and wood. It had two wings, one above the other, and between the wings at the center a man sat with goggles over his eyes and his feet on a crossbar.

Her first thoughts of flying were dramatically changed in early life. She became one of twelve women who qualified for a pilot's license. Because of her personal qualities and flying experience, she was given the opportunity to be the first woman to fly the Atlantic. When asked, "How would you like to be the first woman to fly the Atlantic?", she asked for details. Miss Earhart had owned several planes and had flown more than five hundred hours. She said the role of passenger did not appeal to her much, and hoped that, weather conditions permitting, she could take her turn at the controls. At that time, however, she was unable to fly with the aid of instruments alone, and her experience with trimotored ships had been inconse-

quential. Yet, the opportunity was overwhelming. She accepted.

On June 17, 1928 she became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic as a passenger with Wilmer Stultz as pilot and Lou Gordon, mechanic. Upon landing when asked, "Aren't you excited?", her answer came slowly. "Excited? No." Amelia took her leg off from the arm of the chair and sat up straight. "It was a wonderful experience, but all I did was lie on the floor of the fuselage and take pictures of the clouds. We didn't see much of the ocean. Bill did all the flying - had to. I was just baggage," she said, "like a sack of potatoes."

Even in those days it appeared for all her lack of ostentation she would yet write drama in the skies; her simplicity would capture people everywhere, her strength of character would hold her on her course; in calm pursuit of an end not personal she would achieve greatness. Above all, she had a quality of imaginative daring that was to wing her like an arrow.

When a friend mentioned, "You're still the first woman to fly the Atlantic, and what's more, the first woman pilot to do it," Amelia was not convinced. "Oh, well," she said, "maybe someday I'll try it alone."

Try she did. Throughout her early years she established many "firsts." However, they were not without incident, including seven crashes, many unplanned landings in out of the way places with no landing strips, problems with weather, getting lost, having engine failures, blown tires, etc. She was undaunted. Adversity seemed to strengthen her determination.

Amelia M. Earhart

Her “firsts” place her high among the true leaders of the world:

1928 June 17: The first woman to fly across the Atlantic as a passenger, with Wilmer Stultz, pilot, and Lou Gordon, mechanic.

1929 August 24: Third place in the first Women’s Air Derby Race; from Santa Monica, CA, to Cleveland, OH.

1930 July 6: Women’s speed record; three-kilometer course; at 181.18 mph.

1931 April 8: World’s altitude record for autogiros; at 18,451 feet; in Pitcairn autogiro.

1932 May 20-21: First woman to fly solo across the Atlantic; from Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, to Londonderry, Ireland; time: 14 hours and 56 minutes.

1932 August 24-25: Women’s non-stop transcontinental speed record; from Los Angeles, California, to Newark, New Jersey; 2,447.8 miles; time: 19 hours and 5 minutes.

1933 July 7-8: Broke her own transcontinental speed record of the year before; in her Lockheed Vega; from Los Angeles, California, to Newark, New Jersey; time: 17 hours, 7 minutes, and 30 seconds.

1935 January 11-12: First to fly solo from Honolulu, Hawaii, to Oakland, California; in her Lockheed Vega; 2,408 miles; time: 18 hours and 16 minutes.

1935 April 19-20: First to fly solo from Los Angeles, CA to Mexico City; in her Lockheed Vega; time: 13 hours and 23 minutes.

1935 May 8: Solo flight from Mexico City to Newark, New Jersey; time: 14 hours and 19 minutes.

1937 March 17-18: Flight from Oakland, California, to Honolulu, Hawaii; in Lockheed Electra.

1937 July 3: Record flight around the world at the equator; with navigator Fred J. Noonan; in Lockheed Electra; covered a distance of 22,000 miles, until strange disappearance over the Pacific somewhere between Lae, New Guinea, and Howland Island.

After her solo flight across the Atlantic, Amelia expressed her feelings concerning the importance of what she was accomplishing. “If science advances,” she said, “and aviation progresses, and international good will is promoted because of my flight, no one will be more delighted than I - or more surprised.”

For Amelia, who once had said to her husband, “I don’t want to go; but when I do, I’d like to go in my plane-quickly,” the last word of her wish must have struck her now with sudden and ironic force.

Yet, as she had so often before, Amelia Earhart must have met this challenge with stubborn self-control and resolute courage. For here at last was her unmistakable, but irrefutable, fate.

Dear General Bellis,

Amelia Earhart was a pioneer in the early days of flying who had the tenacity, dedication and humility of a true professional.

It is a pleasure to be able to sponsor a scholarship in her honor so that others may follow in her footsteps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Harry". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

*Harry J. Gray
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer
United Technologies Corp.*



The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to College or Preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

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