



The Ninety-Nines

Celebrate Alaska Women Pilots: Past, Present and Future



The Alaska Chapter

The Twenties

AMELIA EARHART CALLED THE FIRST GATHERING OF LICENSED WOMEN PILOTS IN 1929:

99 OF 119 LICENSED WOMEN PILOTS RESPONDED TO THE CALL TO JOIN TOGETHER IN AN ORGANIZATION FOR MUTUAL SUPPORT AND NETWORKING. AMELIA SUGGESTED THE NAME '99s'



Marvel Crosson flew in Alaska with her brother Joe Crosson during 1927-1929. She was out to set records but, unfortunately, Marvel died during the 1st Women's Cross Country Air race. Humorist Will Rogers dubbed this race the "Powder Puff Derby".

Ada Bering saw her first plane in Nome in 1920 when the Black Wolf Squadron landed. In 1929 she married Noel Wien who founded Wien Airlines. She is the mother of Richard Wien a famed Alaska pilot. Ada was a member of the Alaska State Constitutional Convention.



Thyla Allen married Russell Merrill in 1920. In 1925 the Merrills and their sons moved to AK. Russ taught her to fly. After her husband's death, Thyla returned to CA and became the 19th Commercial pilot in the U.S. receiving her ticket on Oct. 30, 1930.



Ruth Jefford got her private pilot's license in 1938 in Nebraska. Ruth achieved commercial and instructor ratings in Alaska and was the 1st Alaskan female CFI. Ruth flew contract mail from Anchorage to Skwentna for 20 years and owned two successful commercial air operations.

Joe Della receives Skwentna's mail from Ruth.



The Thirties, Forties & Fifties



Irene Ryan arrived in Seward by ship in 1931. Her uncle flew her from Seward to Anchorage. In 1932 Irene soloed at Merrill Field. She became a geological engineer and served as a State Representative and a State Senator.



Bush Pilots Wives
While they were blazing new trails in the skyway we were on the home front toting OUR score. Logging up hours of waiting and praying. Minding babies, the weather, the "store" Heroes and heroines? Possibly - probably - But at the time it was all in a day's chore.
Millie Dodson (Jim Dodson Air Service)



Margo Cook went from WASP to teacher in Anchorage. She is a founding Charter Member of the Alaska Chapter of the 99s.



Just a smidge too short to join the WASPs, pilot Jean White found a way to serve by becoming an airplane mechanic and joining the Air Force. Her enthusiasm still shows!



8 Flying Women Organize Local Chapter Of 99ers

"Lady Bird rescues Pilot Jack Hewson" read the headline. Mrs. Harold Romig (Mildred Knapp) received her license in 1938. She performed "the first rescue flight by a woman" when she brought Jack Hewson in safely from the West Forelands. He was "mad as a homet they sent a woman to rescue him" reported her daughter, Delcie Bredheer.



Mildred Knapp Romig



On Friday June 13, 1940 two intrepid young women, Alma Hellin & Margie McQuin, took off from Lock Haven, PA in a Piper Cub Coup and flew to Seattle. Canadian authorities would not them fly over Canada so they boated to Skagway then flew on to Fairbanks. Margie McQuin married pioneer pilot Don Emmons in Fairbanks.



Many an adventuresome WASP found her way to Alaska. Celia Hunter and Virginia Wood ferried two surplus Stinson planes to AK in 1946 and were successful air taxi operators and flight instructors before founding Camp Denali and becoming widely known for their conservation efforts.



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8 Flying Women Organize Local Chapter Of 99ers

- AK Chapter 99s Charter Members
- * Helen Stoddard - 1st Chair
- * Lois Wise - 1st Vice Chair
- * Helen Snyder - 1st Sec'y-Treas
- * Dorothy Burns
- * Pat McGee
- * Celia Mayer
- * Florence Fintak
- * Alyce Humphreys
- Ruth Jefford
- Decema Kimball Andresen
- Betty Loomis
- Laurine Nielsen
- Marge Cook



SEATED: VIRGINIA HELLIN STODDARD HELEN SNYDER DOLLY BOOTH MARGIE COOK LOIS WISE



Decema Kimball Andresen bags a Siberian Polar bear!

Charter Member Decema Kimball Andresen loved to hunt and fish and used her airplane to commute from Palmer to her store, Kimball's, on 5th Avenue.



Renowned Inuit Bush Pilot, Ellen Panek

In 1963 Ingrid Pederson was the first woman to fly a Cessna 205 single engine plane over the North Pole on a flight from Fairbanks, AK to Station Nord, Greenland and then on to Bodo, Norway a total flight time of 32 hours and 30 minutes.

ENCOURAGING WORLD FELLOWSHIP THROUGH FLIGHT



Polar aviators Ingrid Pederson (left) and Polly Vacher (center) share their experiences with the 99s.

Alaska Chapter Ninety-Nines at Merrill Field in March of 1978. Shows standing left to right are: Kathleen Ann Christensen, Treasurer from Palmer, AK; Ruby Pappas, Judy Brown, Anita Benson, Chairwoman, Betty M. Rogers, Secretary, Joy Craig, Mary Reid, Mattie Zaugg, News Reporter, Nita Wood, and Lavelle Betz. Members in front row from left to right are: Joyce L. Bergstrom, Historian and AK Scholarship Chairman, Carolyn L. Kennedy from Wasilla, AK; UNAF Major Barbara A. Hird, Carol Fleming, charter member Lois Wise Knapp from Wasilla, AK and Marjorie Dexter. Except for those otherwise indicated all are pictured as from Anchorage, AK.



Flying Companion Seminars



Blanche Krager

Safety Seminars



Winter Survival Class



Lavelle Betz safely makes one ski landing!

Fly Ins



A 1960's Fly In



Janice Quinlan on Fly In to Circle Hot Springs, 1990

Air Marking



Bethel, Alaska Compass: Rose, 2003



Merrill Field, 1982

PRESERVING THE UNIQUE HISTORY OF WOMEN IN AVIATION