

AMERICAN AVIATION:



Pearl



Rose



Amelia



Jackie



Chuck

Barnstorming
to Mach 1

AMERICAN AVIATION:



Barnstorming to Mach 1

Welcome to 2023 Oklahoma Chautauqua!



*“Oklahoma, ev’ry night my honey lamb and I
Sit alone and talk and watch a hawk makin’ lazy circles in the sky.”*

From the simplest form of human flight – nonmotorized, foot-launched, inflatable wing paragliders – to the most advanced, precision machines, humans have challenged themselves for over two thousand years to fly! One of the most common, recurring dreams is that of flying. To bring us closer to the feeling of flying, The Walt Disney Company developed a still-popular motion simulator called Soarin’, to provide park-goers with a breathtaking, edge-of-the-seat, bird-like “flight” over beautiful landscapes, oceans, forests, and urban structures, thus thrilling the rider who may never experience both the freedom and the control of flying one’s own glider or plane.

But some among us, not satisfied with dreams and imagination, do seek to touch the skies and do so from their seats in the cockpit! From early aviation pioneers to test pilots, these bold aviators have been willing to risk it all to go higher, faster, further.

During our special Chautauqua evenings, we will bring to life five aviators, each with different yet similar stories. We will hear the stories of a pilot’s breath-taking wonderment in flying alone through a star-filled night sky; a courageous little Oklahoma barnstormer who found an inexplicable joy in flying; an accomplished aviator and tenacious social activist who worked to break down the barriers of race, class and gender; a record-setting pilot determined to open the door for other women aviators; and a daredevil test pilot pulled to the edge as he lived for speed.

Chautauqua seeks to bring educational and entertaining programs to our communities, allowing us all to explore, better understand, and learn from the many diverse human experiences that make up our past. We thank our scholars for dedicating their time and resources to research their characters so that they are able to bring to life the true and authentic words, emotions, aspirations, victories and disappointments of the historical characters they present.

Oklahoma Chautauqua depends on the many hours of volunteer time and effort necessary to put together this unique humanities programming. But it would not be possible without the support of you, our marvelous audience, in attending and participating in our workshops and evening performances, and through your financial support.

Now, even though currently earthbound, let’s suspend belief and imagine ourselves flying back in time as we hear the stories of **Amelia Earhart, Pearl Carter Scott, Rose Cousins, Jackie Cochran** and **Chuck Yeager!**

The Chautauqua Committees of Enid, Lawton and Tulsa

This program is funded in part by Oklahoma Humanities (OH) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of OH or NEH.

AMERICAN AVIATION: BARNSTORMING TO MACH 1

PRESENTED BY TULSA CHAUTAUQUA

Workshops inside and evening performances under the tent are at the
Tulsa Historical Society and Museum - 2445 S. Peoria Ave.

1st Workshop at Noon 2nd Workshop at 5:30 p.m.

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*Enid Chautauqua in the Park 2023
at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center*

AMERICAN AVIATION: BARNSTORMING TO MACH 1



Join us on the grounds of the Humphrey Heritage Village at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center. Presented in true Chautauqua style under a big top tent, the week-long program includes daily workshops (at 10:30 am and 12:00 noon) and five evening performances (Tuesday through Saturday). Workshops take place in the historical church in the Humphrey Heritage Village. Evening performances kick off at 6:30 pm with local entertainment.

In case of inclement weather or excessive heat, evening performance will be moved to the Northwestern State University Campus

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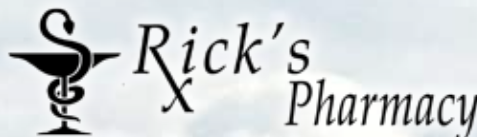
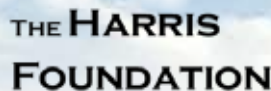
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Workshop and Performance Schedule:

Workshops take place Tuesday through Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. at the Humphrey Heritage Village Church at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center.
Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m., with special entertainment beginning at 6:30 p.m.
Food trucks will be available during the evening performances.



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LAWTON CHAUTAUQUA

AMERICAN AVIATION: BARNSTORMING TO MACH 1

Lawton, Oklahoma

Daily - Tuesday, June 20, 2023 - Saturday, June 24, 2023

Workshops: 10am-11am and 2pm-3pm

Evening Performances: 7pm-8:30pm

NEW LOCATION - All events will be held at:

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Chautauqua 2023



Order of Appearance and Workshop Schedule

See City Pages for time and place in each city

	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1st Workshop	Selene Phillips	Ilene Evans	Karen Vuranch	Doug Mishler	Elsa Wolff
2nd Workshop	Doug Mishler	Elsa Wolff	Selene Phillips	Ilene Evans	Karen Vuranch
Evening Performance	Amelia Earhart	Pearl Carter Scott	Rose Cousins	Jackie Cochran	Chuck Yeager

Workshop Descriptions

TUESDAY

1st workshop (Selene Phillips):

Practicality Meets High Fashion - Women Aviation Uniforms: This workshop will take a look at the WASPs' stylish journey from A-2 leather aviator jackets, Fifinella's wings, horns, goggles, tight yellow slacks, and red high-top boots, to the trainee's Khaki slacks called General's Pants, white blouses and overseas caps, and single-breasted Air Force Blues.

2nd Workshop (Doug Mishler):

Chuck Yeager, "The Beast," and Beyond: This multi-media workshop will be an in-depth focus on Yeager's test pilot years with all its ups and downs - from the start in Ohio flying the first Jets in 1945, on through the X-1 and X-1A days to his F-104 crash in 1963.

WEDNESDAY

1st Workshop (Ilene Evans)

The Tuskegee Airmen Legacy: Black Wings in Blue Skies - stories behind the black pilots trained in the Civilian Training Programs. These men changed America's policies toward African Americans and shattered long held assumptions about their abilities in advanced science and military operations.

2nd Workshop (Elsa Wolff)

AMELIA EARHART: The Final Flight into Mystery - "What happened to Amelia?" Eight decades later and we still want to know. Theories are many, from the plausible to the outrageous. Learn about Amelia's last flight and the theories behind her disappearance including the newest developments in the ongoing search.

THURSDAY

1st Workshop (Karen Vuranch)

Fly Girls: In World War II, aviation was a new and growing field. Air power would prove to be an important weapon of modern warfare and every pilot in the Army Air Forces and the Navy was needed in Europe and the Far East. The WASP, Women Air Service Pilots, was formed for women pilots to serve in non-combat positions. Over 1,000 women ferried planes to war zones, tested aircraft, towed targets for practice and completed a number of other tasks. This workshop will look at the WASP organization and the brave women who served.

2nd Workshop (Selene Phillips)

Miles and Miles of Clear Oklahoma Skies: Set in rural 1920s Oklahoma, the 2009 movie Pearl explores the life of the youngest pilot in American History. The workshop will discuss this special movie, filmed in Oklahoma and created by Chickasaw Nation Productions, and the girl who became a commercial pilot and local barnstorming celebrity before reaching adulthood thanks to her father and a special relationship with Wiley Post.

FRIDAY

1st Workshop (Doug Mishler)

THE COLD WAR AND THE RACE FOR SPACE: A brief overview of what led to this intriguing part of the cold war competition and the characters and issues that were involved.

2nd Workshop (Ilene Evans)

The Mystery and Adventure of Flight: This workshop includes both literature and cinema - from Captain Midnight (the old-time radio show) to the Great Flying Ace (Snoopy) with excerpts of film and aerial photography, poems, songs, and the wonder of flight.

SATURDAY

1st Workshop (Elsa Wolff)

WOMEN AVIATORS OF WWII: A Brief and Personal look at women pilots from Europe during the 2nd World War - Hear dramatic first-person narratives from one of the infamous "Nachthexen" (Night Witches) of Russia; one of the ATA Ferry Pilots from England and Hanna Reitsch, German aviator and test pilot during WWII.

2nd Workshop (Karen Vuranch)

Women of NASA: Since the 1950s, America has been sending astronauts to space. As a nation, we watched space orbits and moon landings with fascination. Although the early astronauts were men, over the years many women have been a part of the space program. They served as engineers, technicians and specialists in many fields. But in 1983, Sally Ride became the first woman astronaut. Since then, many women have been on space missions. This workshop will explore the contributions of women to NASA.

SCHOLARS



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Amelia Earhart: **QUEEN OF THE AIR**

BY ELSA WOLFF



Over 85 years have passed since Amelia disappeared from sight, but she has never vanished from the collective heart and mind of our country. The mention of "Amelia" in poems and songs evokes a strong response deep inside many people. Perhaps it is because she represents the pushing against limitations, the courage to dream, the determination to follow that dream, or the sheer delight in adventure and beauty that touches one's soul deeply. Amelia lives on, not just because her death is a mystery, but because her life remains an inspiration.

Amelia said, "Ours is the commencement of a flying age, and I am happy to have popped into existence at a period so interesting." Amelia's life story reveals the developing world view at the turn of the 20th century and on into the Great Depression, a transformational time for our nation and its people. New frontiers opened with the development of the machine age and aviation, as well as with women getting the vote and their ongoing struggle for equality and opportunity. As a pioneer on the social frontier, Amelia pushed through social expectations even from a young age, pursuing activities not considered proper for a young lady. Overcoming her transient childhood and an alcoholic father, she continued to look for meaning and adventure in her life. She pursued her dreams despite there being no easy path laid out for her. Amelia, in the spirit of a true explorer, focused her interests and passions, boldly going where few women had gone before.

In 1928, the young pilot was part of the crew on a celebrated transatlantic flight in a Fokker F.VIIb/3m seaplane named "Friendship," which departed from Trepassey Harbor, Newfoundland, and landed at Pwll, a small town near Burry Port, Wales. Amelia's career in aviation began with this "Friendship" flight, when she was celebrated as the first woman to cross the Atlantic by airplane. Not stopping there, Amelia became a hero to all, during a time of national obsession with aviation record setting and record breaking. Amelia's accomplishments were recognized around the world and became a source of national pride. The world suddenly started looking at Americans as trend-setters, whereas for centuries America had been trying to emulate Europe. Amelia was an **American** and she was a **woman** -- a role model for women wanting to break out of traditional roles in order to redefine themselves.

Publicity surrounding the "Friendship" flight launched Amelia into the public arena, resulting in a popularity which took even Amelia by surprise. She felt all the acclaim was undeserved, since she had merely been a passenger aboard the plane but had never acted as pilot. It wasn't until four years later, when she flew solo across the Atlantic, that she finally felt she earned her laurels. As Amelia grew accustomed to living in the public eye, she handled the attention of media and public with unusual grace. At the same time, she was painfully aware that there were other women pilots as good as or better than herself -- a fact that kept her working hard at her flying skills.

Amelia's image grew in the coming years as she continued to set records, made long-distance solo flights, engaged in lecture tours, published a book, and participated in the newest developments in aviation.

For instance, in 1930 Amelia Earhart went on a test flight in a Pitcairn autogyro (an aircraft similar to a helicopter) and became the first female autogyro pilot in the world.

Amelia's accomplishments and popularity cannot be understood outside of the context of her husband and promoter, G.P. Putman. There is no doubt that G.P. was a driving force behind her popularity and her busy

schedule. Even after five years of marriage, she still referred to him as, "The Management." G.P. was tenacious about promoting Amelia above all of her equally accomplished, if not more capable, peers. Though Amelia spoke of G.P. as an encourager and helper, her friend and fellow aviatrix, Jackie Cochran, feared that he was putting too much pressure on Amelia. Starting out as business partners and then reluctantly agreeing to his marriage proposal, Amelia referred to their non-traditional arrangement as a "reasonable and contented partnership... a style of dual control." Amelia kept her given name, unusual for the time. G.P. often joked that he was referred to as "Mr. Earhart."

Amelia's involvement in aviation went much deeper than being a pilot. She was also deeply committed to the development and expansion of the aviation industry. Industry leaders recognized her ability to influence society and wanted to capitalize on her icon status. Amelia had what she called a "missionary zeal for the cause of aviation," and she took her ability to influence the American public seriously. Amelia worked closely with The Ludington Line as well as Transcontinental Air Transport, helping to pave the way for people to look at travel by airplane as a viable and reliable means of transportation.

**"THE MOST EFFECTIVE
WAY TO DO IT,**



IS TO DO IT."



Scholar Biography

Elsa Wolff, entertainer and educator, has been performing, teaching, singing, and storytelling for over 20 years. Elsa, also known as “The Guitar Lady,” performs for elementary age children as well as senior citizens throughout the Denver area. In 2008, Elsa added Living History to her pursuits as she began portraying Amelia Earhart. Soon afterward, she added Minnie Pearl, Maria von Trapp and Annie Oakley to her repertoire. With excitement for this format of experiencing history, Elsa also became involved in Colorado Humanities Young Chautauqua Program and enjoys coaching students of all ages. Elsa earned a Bachelor’s degree in German from Willamette University, including several years of study abroad. She is mother of four and lives in her native Colorado. Website: elsa@guitarlady.com



Amelia had passions beyond her love of flying and desire to help the aviation industry. She was a founder and president of the “Ninety-Nines,” an organization of women pilots providing mutual support and the advancement of aviation. She felt strongly about women’s rights and spoke often of her desire for women to be free to pursue opportunity based on aptitude and interest. She spoke often of her concerns about the educational system and how it keeps boys and girls in pre-conceived societal roles. She also worked with Paul Mantz, a noted air racing pilot, to start a flying school in California.

Amelia served as a career counselor and mentor to the female students at Purdue University. Thanks to Purdue’s President Edward C. Elliott and the Purdue Research Foundation, Amelia was given a two-motored Lockheed Electra 10-E, her “Flying Laboratory.” The first project for her Lockheed Electra was to be an around-the-world flight, following an equatorial route. Her goals for this undertaking were more than just another adventure. “My ambition is to have this wonderful gift produce practical results for the future of commercial flying and for the women who may want

**“NEVER INTERRUPT SOMEONE
DOING SOMETHING YOU SAID
COULDN’T BE DONE.”**

to fly tomorrow.” Amelia was especially interested in looking at the human element of flying rather than the mechanical aspect, stating that “the effects of flying on personnel have not always been given the attention they deserve.”

Unfortunately, this was to be Amelia’s last adventure. To this day, it is astounding to see the frequency with which articles appear claiming new insight into the mystery of her disappearance but, as yet, no one has found either human remains or the aircraft. Though theories about the disappearance of Amelia Earhart abound, the lack of any conclusive evidence regarding how she vanished has supported the fascination with her name and image.

Amelia once said, “It is true that there are no more geographical frontiers to push back, no new lands flowing with milk and honey this side of the moon to promise surcease from man-made ills. But there are economic, political, scientific and artistic frontiers of the most exciting sort awaiting faith and the spirit of adventure to discover them.” Those new frontiers still exist today. For those who push against limitations, who have the courage to dream, or are willing to embark on new adventures – no matter the cost, may the life of Amelia Earhart serve as an inspiration. A new frontier awaits us all and it is never a waste of time to dream!



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EULA "Pearl" CARTER SCOTT

BY SELENE PHILLIPS



Eula "Pearl" Carter made her first solo flight on Sept. 12, 1929, at the age of 13. In 1930, she received a student pilot's permit from the Aeronautics Division of the U. S. Department of Commerce. The minimum age requirement was 16, so her parents changed her age to allow her to apply. This made her the youngest "licensed" pilot in the U.S. Her many "first" aviation feats, along with her political activism, positive attitude, and Chickasaw community participation, made her an inspirational and heroic leader.

Pearl was born in Marlow, Oklahoma, on December 9, 1915. When she was 11, her older adopted brother Willie taught her how to drive a car. Her father, George Carter, Sr., had been blinded when broomcorn chaff damaged his eyes and was unable to drive a car. George bought Pearl a 1927 Durant Roadster. By the time she was 12, she was driving to school and chauffeuring her father to business meetings.

One day in 1928, famed American aviator Wiley Post landed a plane in the Carter family's field. Post took her father George for an airplane ride. Then Pearl talked her father into letting Post give her a ride, too. Pearl said the flying bug bit her, and any fear she might have had was overshadowed by the joyous feeling of freedom. Wiley Post became her hero and mentor.

Pearl convinced George that a plane would benefit his business. So, he bought his daughter, whom he called "Peanut," a Curtiss Robin plane modeled after Charles Lindbergh's plane. He built a hangar and an airstrip in a field near their home. George hired an additional instructor to teach Pearl more about flying.

By the age of 14, Pearl became a barnstormer, commercial pilot, and stunt pilot. She scared some of her friends when they flew with her and was a crowd favorite at air shows, barnstorming events, air circuses, festivals, and airport openings in southern Oklahoma and northern Texas.

Post eventually invited Pearl to pilot his world-famous plane, the *Winnie Mae*, a special Lockheed Model 5C Vega. Flying the *Winnie Mae*, Post had completed two around-the-world record flights and several special high-altitude sub-stratospheric research flights. The only other person Post had allowed to fly the *Winnie Mae* was his chief mechanic.

The Carter family were leading citizens in Marlow. Her father loved jazz and created the Carter family band that played at dances and churches; Pearl played the violin and the saxophone. Pearl said her daddy would never allow her to say, "I can't." If he heard her say that, she received a spanking because, he said, "You can, if you want to."

She met her husband, Lewis "Scotty" Scott, in Marlow.

They eloped in 1931, when she was 16. The couple had three children, Georgia Louise, Billy Joe, and Carter Roy. Pearl said her three careers were aviation; public service to the Chickasaw nation; and motherhood, the most important to her. After having her first child, she ended her flying career when she decided to focus on her children. She retired from flying in 1934 and only flew twice after that.

Wiley Post and Will Rogers died in a 1935 Alaskan airplane crash. Her father died one year later, at the age of 50. The loss of vision in one of Post's eyes and her father's blindness had created a commonality between the two men for Pearl. "If he [George] could do that without his eyes and Wiley could do what he did

with one eye, if a person wants to do anything, they can do it," Pearl said.

Pearl had become a celebrity, but the Great Depression and drought made for challenging times.

Pearl and Scotty had to dig daily to access water for their cows.

Eventually, the couple lost two farms. Poverty followed. Pearl worked at a grocery store and a café and as a secretary. Scotty worked as a pipe fitter. They bought a house trailer and moved around to find work. A fire destroyed the couple's home and possessions. The strain ended their 30-year marriage, a move she later regretted. Pearl remarried, but that marriage did not last.

At this low point in her life, her philosophy to never give up kicked in, and she turned things around. Her positive attitude led her down a new path as a respected tribal elder. This began in 1972, after she studied at the Desert Willow Indian Training Center in Tucson, Arizona. She trained and met representatives from Indian tribes throughout the U.S. She worked 12- to 14-hour days to help people with health problems and became a community health representative. Often her office was in her car due to the remoteness of the areas where she worked.

In 1983, Pearl was elected the first female legislator for the Chickasaw Nation and served three terms, helping the tribe prosper. At the end of her terms, Governor Bill Anoatubby made Pearl his Marlow Representative because he valued her advice and input.

A Chickasaw nation advocate, Pearl was a member of the Marlow Chamber of Commerce; the VFW Auxiliary; and the OX5 Aviation Pioneers, a national organization established in 1955 dedicated to preserving early aviation history, specifically the Glenn H. Curtiss OX5 engine.

Pearl's parents were George and Lucinda "Lucy" Gibson Carter. Half Chickasaw and half Choctaw, Lucy was a descendant of people who were forced to relocate from southern Mississippi to Indian Territory,



**"NEVER
GIVE UP!"**



Scholar Biography

Selene G. Phillips, Wabigonikewikwe, Selene's Ojibwe name, is a member of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe nation in Wisconsin. She teaches writing and Native American studies at the University of Louisville. Her doctoral dissertation is about Indigenous epistemology and native ways of understanding and reinterpreting Sacagawea. Prior to becoming a professor, she worked as a television news anchor, a radio and television news reporter, and producer.

Selene is a published poet. Her poem "blood land" responds to Wynton Marsalis's ode to "Calling the Indians Out" and was selected for the July 2022 edition of *Jelly Bucket*, Special Section: Indigenous Voices, a literary journal published by Bluegrass Writer's Studio at Eastern Kentucky University.

Her Chautauqua characters include Sacagawea, Mary Todd Lincoln, and Chickasaw tribal leader and pilot Eula "Pearl" Carter Scott.



today's eastern Oklahoma, on the 1837 Trail of Tears. Pearl had two older sisters, Opaletta Williamson and Arnetta Brooks, and two brothers, George Carter, Jr., and adopted Choctaw orphan Willie.

As a revered Chickasaw elder, Pearl Carter Scott was listed in the 1978-79 edition of "Personalities of the South," in the 1989-90 edition of "Outstanding Women of America," and in the Chickasaw Historical Section of the magazine *Memphis: The City Magazine*.

In her later years, Pearl toured the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum and saw the *Winnie Mae* again. She was honored as 1990 Marlow High School Homecoming

**"IF YOU FALL DOWN,
DON'T LAY DOWN THERE.
YOU GET UP,
AND SHOW PEOPLE THAT YOU CAN
DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO.
AND YOU CAN,
IF YOU WANT TO."**

Queen and as Guest of Honor for the 60th Anniversary Celebration of Wylie Post's trip around the world.

In 1995, she was nominated and accepted into the Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame and named to the Chickasaw Nation Hall of Fame. She was inducted into the International Women's Air and Space Museum Hall of Fame and was a charter member of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian. She belonged to the Oklahoma Wing Confederate Air Force (now known as the Oklahoma Wing Commemorative Air Force). She participated in the 2001 Will Rogers and Wiley Post Fly-In.

Pearl died in her sleep at the age of 89 on March 28, 2005, in Oklahoma City. She is buried at the Marlow Cemetery in Stephens County, Oklahoma. She had 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

In 2009, the Chickasaw Nation TV Video Network produced "Pearl," a movie that chronicled Pearl's life. The network also produced the documentary "Pearl Carter Scott: On Top of the World" in 2010.

Pearl remained positive. She said, "If you fall down, don't lay down there. You get up, and show people that you can do what you want to do. And you can, if you want to."



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Rose Agnes Rolls Cousins: Aviator and Activist

BY ILENE EVANS



The 1920s was an age of firsts for women and especially for young Americans of African descent. One such area of accomplishment was aviation. Rose Agnes Rolls Cousins (1920-2006) followed one of those pioneers, Bessie Coleman, in spirit and in action. America's military and civilian capacity in transport and commerce was escalating through the growth of aviation in the 1940s. But it was generally limited to wealthy men daring to tame the skies, who could afford the planes and the training. Very few women, even after Bessie Coleman's brave accomplishments, seemed to change policy or the minds of the public.

Rose Agnes Rolls defied the limits set for young ladies and let others know in no uncertain terms that she was not afraid of anything. Her mother and father encouraged their children to try things; and not to be afraid to defy barriers. Rose had a recurring dream where she was flying, using her arms as wings. She grew up in Fairmont, West Virginia, where aviators put on airshows and gave rides to courageous spectators. Rose's father took her on such a plane ride. She never forgot that exhilarating first flight with her dad. The wonder of seeing the world from above, from a bird's point of view, was part of the mystique of aviation for her. The lure and adventure many of us feel when we think of flight sparked a lifelong dream in Rose, a dream that she made real.

Academically, Rose was advanced enough to enter college at sixteen years of age at West Virginia State College (now University) in 1936. The state of West Virginia offered the most advanced levels of education for people of color. She pursued a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration. Upon graduation in 1940 she worked in a new office on campus, the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP), where she met the director James C. Evans. Rose was still in love with the idea of flying and was determined to have a place in the program for herself. She was relentless in her request and soon had the director convinced that she could handle the flight training offered, keeping up with the men. Persistence is what it took. Rose was no stranger to competition and defending her abilities. She had been doing that since she was a little girl, besting her brother and his friends again and again in neighborhood games on the mountainside. As a youngster, Rose played with the boys, competed with them, challenged them, and won; she knew she could do anything they could do. Her assertive attitude and her advanced skills helped her gain access to the new CPTP program offered to West Virginia State College students in aviation. Ever confident, she proved herself again and again.

Rose's achievements were outstanding on the airfield. She was fiercely determined to be treated as a person and

not simply as a helpless "girl." She became the first black woman in the country licensed as a solo pilot in the CPTP. The CPTP was administered at U.S. colleges and universities from 1939 through 1942 by the Civil Aeronautics Authority. West Virginia State College was one of the six black colleges allowed to participate: West Virginia State College, Howard University, Tuskegee Institute, Hampton Institute, Delaware College for Colored Students, and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College. More women were inspired to follow her example.

The training for pilots was rigorous. The curriculum included seventy-two training hours on the ground and thirty-five to forty-five hours in the air. The CPTP included flight lessons, as well as training in navigation, meteorology, air traffic regulations, advanced mathematics, and mechanical engineering. To get her license, Rose had to learn how to put the plane in a spin

and pull it back out again, land with the engine off, fly upside down, and complete a solo cross-country flight using only a compass and sight as her guides. Her initial cross-country flight was to Parkersburg, West Virginia, from Institute, West Virginia. In preparation for her flight, Rose checked her maps, plotted her course, and checked the meteorology.

She donned her helmet, squeezed herself into the small open-cockpit plane, and took off. Despite strong winds, she flew the distance making the required stops along the way.

At twenty-one years of age, Rose received her pilot's license under the CPTP. She made many more cross-country flights in order to keep her license active and up-to-date. One such flight was to Pittsburgh, where she flew into an unexpected electrical storm.

The plane had dual controls, so while one pilot flew, the other plotted the way back to Pittsburgh. "We were in this terrible lightning storm," Rose recalls. "The lightning and thunder were all around, and the plane was bouncing everywhere. If we had been struck, that would have been it. It was the only time I have ever been frightened in the air. And when we got back to Pittsburgh, both of us got out and kissed the ground." (Furbee, 1998)

In 1941, eleven graduates from West Virginia State College's pilot training program traveled to Tuskegee, Alabama. They answered the call to try out for the U.S. Air



**"I AM NOT A GIRL,
I'M A PERSON!"**



Scholar Biography

Ilene Evans is an energetic, vibrant, original performing artist, using movement, poetry, story, song, rhythm and rhyme inspired by a rich Affrilachian life and all its folklore. Her historical portrayals of women who have changed the world include Harriet Tubman, Bessie Coleman, Ethel Waters, Memphis Tennessee Garrison, Eslanda Robeson, Elizabeth Catlett, and Coralie Franklin Cook.



Force training program for black combat pilots created and headed by Charles Alfred "Chief" Anderson. Rose was one of the eleven, the only woman. Rose was a licensed solo pilot from West Virginia State's program, equal in qualifications and skill to the men, but she was denied admittance to the military because she was female.

Of the ten young West Virginia State College men who applied in the military, only two were accepted into the military aviation training program in Tuskegee, Alabama. They were Mac Ross, from Ohio, and George Spencer "Spanky" Roberts, from Fairmont, WV. Roberts actually got his license after Rose but went on to become a commander of the 99th Pursuit Squadron of black combat pilots of the Tuskegee Airmen. "They were the only squadron that didn't lose a bomber during the war, so they certainly proved those who doubted their abilities wrong," Cousins said.

After being turned down by the military at Tuskegee, Rose applied to join the group of white civilian women pilots who ferried supplies to the troops. The Women Army Service Pilots (WASP) said no because of her race. So, she returned to West Virginia State College and helped run the CPTP there.

"I'LL JUST PUT MY HAIR UP UNDER MY HAT. YOU CAN PRETEND I'M A MAN. THEN YOU CAN SAY ANYTHING YOU WANT."

On New Year's Eve, 1941, not long after returning to West Virginia State, Rose married Ted Cousins from Montclair, New Jersey. They had two daughters, Emorene Nicole and Adrienne Michelle. Ted had been a student at West Virginia State and a junior tennis pro; he continued to teach and coach throughout his life.

The family returned to Fairmont to care for Rose's aging mother and grandmother. Rose worked as a high-school teacher and a secretary before settling into the career that she held for 39 years as manager of medical records for the Monongahela Valley Association of Health Centers in Fairmont. She retired in 1999.

It was not until 1980 that Rose's achievements were recognized nationally. Rose was inducted as an honorary member of Tuskegee Airmen because of her flight experience, her tenacity in breaking down barriers of race and gender, and her rigorous training with the men who would later go on to fight overseas in World War II. When the men she trained with were called to Tuskegee, she went with them, fully qualified to contend with military combat flight. But she was denied the opportunity to serve and all her accomplishments would not budge the commanders to allow her to follow her dreams.

Rose was tireless in body, mind, and spirit. She seemed to always have energy to burn, remaining in constant motion, at work and at play. Rose was an inspiration to her family and to everyone with whom she came into contact. She loved to help young women move up in their careers and in their lives. Rose continued to fly and point people's aspirations toward the skies.

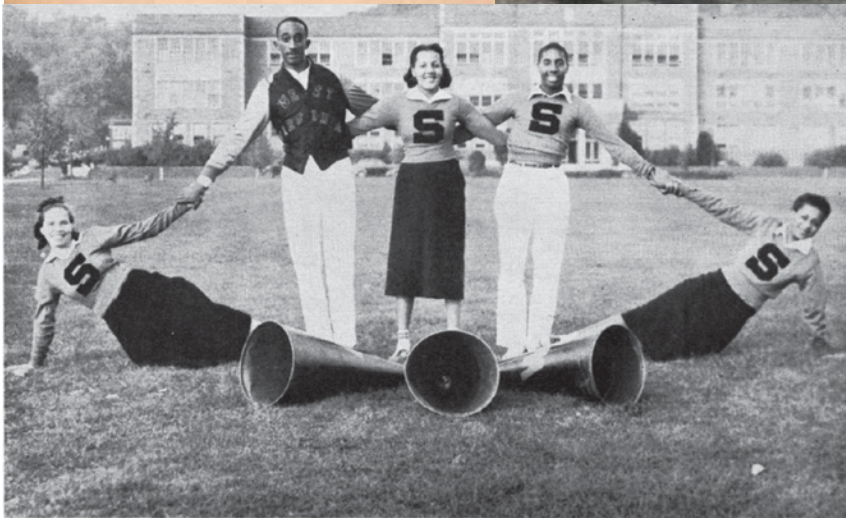
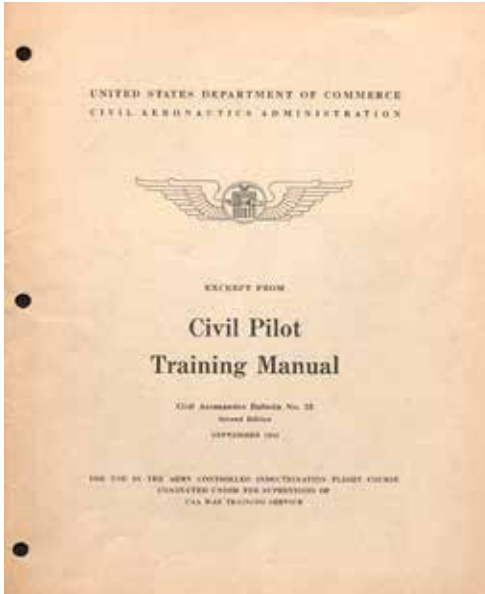
Rose was very active in community and political life in and around Fairmont, WV. She was a lifetime member of

the NAACP, a civil rights activist, a teacher, an actor and director of plays with the Marion County Little Theater and the Fairmont State College Summer Theater, a member of the West Virginia Aeronautics Association and the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., a member of the Soroptimist International, and a member of the American Medical Records Association.

In her later years Rose went to live with her daughter,

Adrienne Michelle, in Washington, D.C. Rose passed away July 30, 2006, at the age of 86, at Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C., after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Rose is remembered fondly in Fairmont, WV, where the City Council of Fairmont and the West Virginia Legislature, have dedicated a new bridge constructed over Coal Run Hollow in Fairmont, WV, to honor Rose. It is named the Rose Agnes Rolls Cousins Memorial Bridge.



CHEER LEADERS



West Virginia State College

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JACKIE COCHRAN

Flying at a Thousand Miles a Minute

BY KAREN VURANCH



By all accounts, Jacqueline Cochran was a remarkable woman. Born in abject poverty, and with only a third-grade education, she grew to be a prominent businesswoman and aviator. She dined with presidents and leaders of state throughout the world, invented revolutionary products for her cosmetics company, directed the World War II WASP program, funded the final flight of her dear friend Amelia Earhart, and held more aviation records than any other pilot, male or female, living or dead. *The New York Times* reported in her obituary that she held more than two hundred records, and a National Park Service website confirms that, as of December 2021, she still holds more international speed, distance, and altitude records than any other pilot.

Yet Jackie, as she was known, was a complicated woman.

Indeed, she was a human dynamo with a prodigious list of firsts – the first woman civilian to receive the Distinguished Service Medal, the only woman to receive Air Force Association Award for distinguished civilian service, and only one of five (and the only woman) named “member of honor” of the *Federation Aeronautique Internationale*.

She was honored with awards from 46 national organizations and 6 foreign countries, including the French Legion of Honor. She was incredibly persuasive. Dede Deaton, the WASP program administrator said, “She could sell hot bricks in hell.” For those she considered friends, she had enormous generosity. When General Hap Arnold retired, he lamented that he had everything but a jeep. She had one wrapped in cellophane and delivered to his front yard.

Yet, her biographer Doris Rich describes her as impatient, imperious, demanding and arrogant. Stuart Symington, the head of the brand new US Air Force (founded in 1947), said she was one of the most competitive persons he had ever met. One writer said, “She was well-respected, but not well-liked.”

It is not surprising. A childhood such as Jackie’s would have crushed the average person. She was born in a wretched sawmill town in Florida. At age four she was roaming the woods to find food. She was working by age seven and at age eight dropped out of school to work long hours in a textile mill with her family in Alabama. When she was thirteen, the family returned to Florida, leaving her to make a living on her own as a helper in a beauty salon. There was virtually no love or emotional support from her family. Her mother was so completely indifferent to her that Jackie fabricated a story that this was her foster family. For the rest of her life, she supported them financially but never acknowledged them as family.

A psychiatrist would have a field day studying Jackie

Cochran. A child who is unloved and forced to fend for herself at an early age often has difficulty with relationships as an adult. In addition, it is not uncommon for the child to grow up aggressive and competitive. Jackie’s abrasive nature is an excellent example of this psychological impact.

One person who breached Jackie’s emotional defenses was her husband and love of her life, Floyd Odlum. Not only did they love each other completely, his immense wealth helped to finance her passion for airplanes. Floyd’s life, like Jackie’s, was a rags-to-riches story. He had an impoverished childhood, but by the time Jackie met him, he was one of the wealthiest men in America. A millionaire financier, he was said to be the only one who made money in the Depression; he had an uncanny gift for buying and selling companies with huge profit. It was Floyd who helped Jackie get her cosmetics business off the ground – literally – when he suggested she could cover more ground promoting her company if she learned to fly. The Jacqueline Cochran Cosmetics Company, with its logo

“Wings to Beauty,” was a major player in the beauty field, rivaling Helena Rubenstein and Charles of the Ritz.

Floyd may have suggested flying lessons, but Jackie was already enamored with the idea of flying. In 1932, using vacation days from her job in a New York City salon, Jackie took flying lessons. Immediately, she found her passion. As

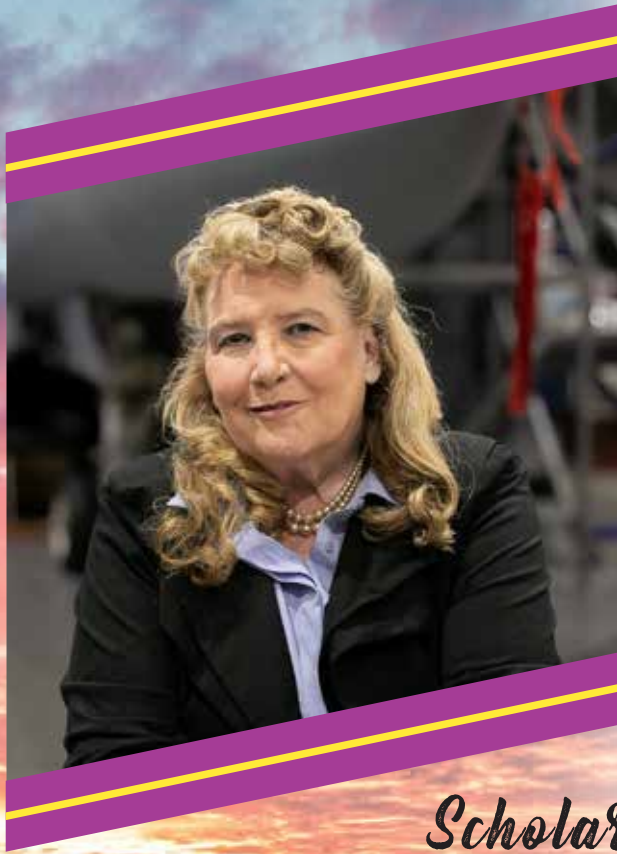
she stated in her autobiography, “I had only been in the plane an hour, just scratched the surface but I was less beautician and more flyer already.” Floyd had bet her the cost of the course, \$495, that she couldn’t do it in three weeks, and Husky Lewellyn, her flight instructor, predicted it would take her three months. Yet Jackie completed her flight tests in only seventeen days. Later, Lewellyn told the *New York Post* that she was a “born flyer, one of the smartest gals in the air I ever saw.”

She was not only smart; she was an excellent pilot. In his autobiography, Chuck Yeager, the first pilot to break the sound barrier, stated, “I’m thinking of Jackie Cochran, who was really outstanding, much better than many, many male pilots I have flown with.” Furthermore, she was fearless, taking risks and pushing herself and her planes to the maximum. She once said, “To live without risk for me would be tantamount to death.” She passionately believed the way to promote aviation was by pushing the limits. She said, “There has hardly been a race or a record flight by me in which I have not tried out something new or experimental.”

In the 1930’s, she set her sights on winning the prestigious Bendix Race, a Labor Day contest from Burbank to Cleveland. In 1938, she came in first, beginning her prominence as a pilot. She received the first of her fifteen Harmon Trophies, given for the outstanding woman pilot in the world, and she won the first of four trophies from the Women’s National Aeronautical Association for outstanding



“I HAVE FOUND ADVENTURE IN FLYING, IN WORLD TRAVEL, IN BUSINESS, AND EVEN CLOSE AT HAND... ADVENTURE IS A STATE OF MIND - AND SPIRIT.”



Scholar Biography

Karen Vuranch is no stranger to Oklahoma Chautauqua. She has portrayed TV chef Julia Child, nursing pioneer Clara Barton, Hollywood gossip columnist Louella Parsons, Irish pirate Grace O'Malley, American literary giant Edith Wharton, Archaeologist Gertrude Bell and, most recently, 60s pop star "Mama" Cass Elliot. She has toured nationally and internationally with *Coal Camp Memories*, a play about women in the Appalachian coalfields. Karen recently retired as a faculty member of Concord University but continues to teach as an adjunct. Karen has an undergraduate degree from Ashland University in Theatre and Sociology and an M.A. in Humanities from Marshall University, with a major in American Studies and a minor in Celtic Studies. She has eight academic publications and has released two CD's of stories and a DVD of *Coal Camp Memories*.



woman pilot. In 1938, *The NY Times Sunday Magazine* called her the "First Lady of the Air Lanes" and *Popular Aviation* said she was "Queen of the Skyways."

When World War II began, Jackie approached President Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor with a plan for women to ferry planes to Europe. In 1941, General Hap Arnold, chief of the Army Air Force, asked her go to England to study their program. Jackie became the first woman to pilot a bomber across the ocean and took a group of 25 women to serve as pilots for Great Britain. Within a year, she was called home to train women pilots and became the head of the Women's Flying Training Detachment, which eventually merged with another

"IT COMES WITH FAITH, FOR WITH COMPLETE FAITH THERE IS NO FEAR OF WHAT FACES YOU IN LIFE OR DEATH."

agency to create Women Airforce Service Pilots, or WASP. Jackie was appointed to the General Staff of the US Army Air Forces.

Sadly, she resisted militarization of the WASPs. Since the Army Air Force was still under the auspices of the Army, if the WASP program was militarized it would fall under the WAC, the Women's Army Corp, and Jackie would have to report to Colonel Oveta Hobby. Jackie's excuse was that the only thing Oveta knew about airplanes was that her son once had wallpaper with planes on it. Jackie would not let someone who knew nothing of planes run an aviation program. While that might be true, it is more likely that Jackie would not have considered a supervisor, much less another woman, telling her what to do. The WASP program was disbanded in 1944, and it was not until 1977 that the women were militarized, receiving all veterans benefits.

Jackie resisted achieved militarization for her WASP program, but she was instrumental in creating a US Air Force separate from the Army after the war. Flying all over the nation, she successfully lobbied civilian support for the newest branch of the US military.

Her crowning achievement was as the first woman to break the sound barrier. Working with General Chuck Yeager, who became a close friend, she trained on the F-86. On May 18, 1953, she broke the sound barrier – twice – exceeding Mach 1. The first time it was not recorded officially; she completed a second flight in the same day and received official recognition. Later, in 1964, she would pass the speed of Mach 2.

Indeed, Jackie Cochran spent her life flying at a thousand miles a minute. She accomplished so much, received accolades and recognition from organizations and nations throughout the world. Yet her abrasive personality alienated many and, perhaps, is the reason why she is not well-known today. Still, Jackie Cochran flew to heights few of us experience. The National Park Service said it well: "Jacqueline Cochran went higher and faster into the frontiers of aviation than any woman before, breaking through the glass ceiling and the sound barrier from rags to riches – blazing a trail for other heroic women to follow."

As Jackie herself said, "Earth-bound souls know only that underside of the atmosphere in which they live... But go up higher ...and the sky turns dark and up high enough one can see the stars at noon. I have."



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CHUCK YEAGER

had **“THE RIGHT STUFF”**

BY DOUG A. MISHLER



Even though the self-effacing Charles Yeager was always irritated by the question "Do you have the right stuff?" the answer was obvious. The "right stuff" is seen in the 21-year-old Chuck's being a double ace in WWII or being chased across the Pyrenees by Nazis. Yet for most people Chuck's "right stuff" was most conspicuous during his years as a test pilot, when he shattered the unbreakable sound barrier.

But for me, Chuck's right stuff was most intriguingly apparent when he was on the ground! Seemingly every day of his life included some act outside the norms of regular life. The stuff was there in the hills of West Virginia when barefoot ten-year-old Chuck hunted squirrels to feed his family before he went to school. His remaining years were packed with endless and even notorious ground escapades, whether in bars or on motorcycles, horses, or cars. The key to all of Chuck's "right stuff" was simple: living life on his own terms, with the "ah shucks" swagger of a man who knew who he was and enjoyed

proving folks wrong. Chuck was a man who loathed losing (even at ping pong), who crammed adventures into every waking moment, who always seemed to be on the edge of disaster while "loving every damn minute of it!"

Raised tough, independent, and strong-willed, Chuck was not a great student of anything but mechanics. He barely finished high school for, as he said, "I liked hunting and fishing more than learning history or English anyway, and then I discovered girls and went to hell as a student." Yet 17-year-old Yeager wanted more than girls and the hills, and this yearning and his mechanical bent compelled Chuck to enlist in the Army Air Corps six months before Pearl Harbor.

Chuck would always graciously note that he owed the Air Corps, as they "made me whatever I am," which was true, as it was the perfect home for this gifted and tenacious man. Yet while he loved fixing airplanes, he hated doing KP, so within months he applied and was accepted into the war time "emergency enlisted pilot training" program. He just wanted to make sergeant and get out of peeling potatoes, but instead he discovered his calling. After tossing his lunch a few times on his instructors, Chuck's amazing eyesight, superb coordination, and unique oneness with an aircraft made him a standout pilot who "waxed the ass" of much more seasoned fliers (mostly "damn college boys"). Chuck was totally at home in a cockpit, especially in intense and dangerous situations. His "right stuff" drove him quickly up the lists of new pilots and even garnered the grudging respect of a few "grumpy college boys."

He trained first in Tonopah, Nevada, but after crashing

one plane in a farmer's yard (by way of the man's barn), he finished his training in Oroville, California. There he met the perfect partner for his future, the tough and smart "Glamorous Glennis" Dickhouse. His marriage proposal was quintessentially Chuck. He simply went off to war in November 1943, telling Glennis "I will send all my pay to you, and we can figure out what to do with it when I get back."

Chuck's "right stuff" was amply displayed in Europe. On his seventh mission he shot down his first plane, and on his eighth he was shot down. Though suffering multiple shrapnel wounds over the next twenty-five days as the Germans chased him, he hid in barns, worked with the French underground making explosives, and finally fled over the Pyrenees mountains to Spain. Chuck escaped with a wounded British pilot, whose lower leg he had to amputate

before he dragged the unconscious man two days through the freezing snow-covered mountains to safety. Chuck's "right stuff" earned him a Bronze Star.

After his escape Chuck had to appeal all the way to the Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight David Eisenhower, not to be sent home. Ike greeted him by saying "I want to meet the man who feels he's getting a raw deal by being sent home." Chuck responded, "General, it just ain't

right, I only done eight missions and I got a lot of fighting left to do." Back in the war Chuck soon became a double ace, including the incredibly rare "ace in a day." An ace fighter pilot has shot down five enemy aircraft; a double ace has shot down ten or more; an "ace in a day" has become an ace in a single day. He was perhaps the first to shoot down a German Messerschmitt 262 jet fighter, and ended the war as an esteemed Captain who flew sixty-one missions and had 11.5 kills.

After the war, Chuck became a test pilot flying anything and everything to its limits (and often beyond) from the newest jets to captured MIG 15s. In late 1946 Colonel Albert Boyd picked Chuck over many irritated senior "college boys" to pilot the rocket-powered X-1 ("the beast") rocket program to research high-speed flight. Chuck took the job for the challenge, but only after he got his carousing buddies Bob Hoover and Jack Ridley assigned as well.

So started one of the most fantastic eras in aviation as Chuck and company took the lead in the rush from prop planes to jets to rockets at the edge of space. This era later became the focus of author Tom Wolfe's book (and later movie), *The Right Stuff*. Chuck, Jack, and Bob literally learned "on the fly" pressing closer each day to "the demon," the sound barrier. Most engineers and pilots felt the barrier was literally a wall, one that had already killed dozens of pilots and



**"I AM NOT A SOPHISTICATED PERSON,
BUT I LIVE BY A BASIC PRINCIPLE:
I DO ONLY WHAT I ENJOY."**



Scholar Biography

Since 1993 Doug has been nationally recognized for bringing “history to life.” Doug has presented figures from Nikita Khrushchev to Dwight D. Eisenhower. He has made over 800 first-person presentations of over thirty historical figures, including Stonewall Jackson, Henry Ford, Pablo Picasso, Theodore Roosevelt, Chuck Yeager, Gene Roddenberry, Ernie Pyle, and P. T. Barnum. The voices in his head keep him busy, but also in the last eight years he founded and has been the Managing Artistic Director of Restless Artists’ Theatre. When not in the theatre or doing his characters, Mishler has taught American Cultural history for over twenty years. Like his idol T. R., Doug believes there is still plenty of time to grow up and get a “real job”—but later!



would most likely kill Chuck as well.

On October 14, 1947, Chuck created history in a flight which lasted just five minutes. Flying with broken ribs (from an inebriated midnight horse ride), he ignited all four of “the beast’s” rockets and blazed through the barrier at Mach 1.07.

In his “ah shucks” style Chuck later stated that “breaking the barrier was a letdown, it was really Jello,” profoundly adding that “the barrier was not in the sky, just in our knowledge and skill at supersonic flight.”

“I WAS DETERMINED TO BE THE BEST AT WHATEVER I DID AND BEAT ALL COMERS.”

And so it went in the Mojave Desert, flights that reset the parameters of human capability and imagination. There at Muroc Army Air Field (later named Edwards Air Force Base), each day Chuck and the boys expanded the envelope, flying fantastic machines on the edge of control, at the edge of space, at twice the speed of sound, or about 1200 MPH. Of course, each night they expanded boundaries too, living as they flew, on the edge: wild parties at Pancho Barnes ranch, midnight inebriated motorcycle rides without lights, and drunken hunting expeditions. Chuck’s great escapes on the ground were mirrored by several in the air, including one where he landed the plane nonchalantly despite a harrowing 50,000-foot free-fall spin. For this escapade he won the Distinguished Service Medal.

By 1954, now-General Albert Boyd and Chuck both agreed his luck was running out as a test pilot, and so he was assigned as an F86H squadron commander in Germany. In 1957 he moved up to wing command of F-100D’s, and then in 1962 Colonel Yeager was assigned as the first commandant of the Air Force Aerospace Research Pilot’s School at Edwards Air Force Base. In 1963 during a test flight of an NF-104’s capabilities for teaching his pilots, Chuck’s controls failed and after spinning down over 95,000 feet he “punched out” only to be set on fire by the seat’s rockets and end up burning off two fingertips and part of his face as he fell to earth.

In 1966, Yeager was given a safer command and for the next two years Chuck and his 405th Tactical Fighter Wing flew hundreds of missions over Vietnam. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1969, but in 1975 at only age 54 he retired rather than get another star and be “forced into a damn full-time desk job.”

He and Glennis moved to Grass Valley, California, to hunt and fish, but he still found time to do a cameo in the movie *The Right Stuff*, fly hang gliders, and be elected to both the Aviation and the Aerospace Halls of fame. He was also awarded the Congressional Medal; shilled cars and parts on TV; sat on the Challenger Commission; weathered Glennis’ death in 1990; and married Victoria D’Angelo in 2003 (which caused an ugly breach with his family). Amazingly, after his life on the edge Chuck died peacefully on December 7, 2020, at age 97.

In his autobiography Chuck summed up his life by saying, "Yes, I'm a damn good pilot, but the best? I won't say that...but I am one of the title contenders." The "right stuff" indeed.

Chuck's legacy is simple: he was the blue print for continuing generations of pilots, both those who head into space and those who merely push the surly bonds of

earth. His sensitivity to his machine, his amazing courage, his coolness under pressure, and his larger than life exploits still mark him as the pilot's pilot. He is spoken of in reverent tones by those who seek to find the limits of man and machine. In a way he would hate, he has become an American hero, the personification of everything that we see as both good and bad within the American character.



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