

Soaring in the Sunset - Kylie Murray Memorial Flight Training Scholarship

Flying was a part of Kylie Murray, but far from all of her.

Kylie found comfort and joy being in flight. Her positive outlook on life was reflected in each and every challenge she set her mind to. As an active flight instructor, ski and snowboard instructor (at Steamboat Mountain!), lifeguard, captain of her soccer team, deacon at her church, member of Greek life, and much more, Kylie was multi-dimensional.

"Flying allowed her to be free in the sky and take in the surroundings," Kylie's mother, Lisa Murray, said. "She felt a lot of joy in the whole idea of being in flight." In 2018, during Kylie's senior year at Lake Forest High School in Illinois, she earned her private pilot certificate.

When COVID 19 hit in 2020, Kylie was pursuing a Professional Flight degree at Auburn University in Alabama. School shut down. She was sent home. Like many in the general aviation community, Kylie used that extra time to take to the skies. That's when she found Cub Air Flight in Hartford, WI.

Kylie's parents recall her expressing interest in flying a Piper Cub for many years. Kylie would drive more than an hour and 30 minutes—one way!—nearly every day to enjoy the flying and special aviation environment at Hartford.

Leadership was a natural quality of Kylie's. It didn't matter who she was working with, everyone looked up to her for her patience and approachability. It was no surprise when she became the youngest flight instructor at Cub Air Flight, earning her the nickname "Baby Quack". She was doing what she loved best and was surrounded by a community she found just as passionate as herself.

Kylie passed away from an aircraft accident in July of 2021. To keep Kylie's memory soaring, her parents, Geoff and Lisa, established the Kylie Murray Flight Training Scholarship with the EAA Aviation Foundation. The scholarship will be awarded through EAA's Ray Scholars program, which strives to make a positive impact on youths and young adults alike who have a strong passion for aviation. In addition to financial support, the Ray Scholars program connects recipients with a local chapter that offers moral support throughout flight training and creates a welcoming environment for young aviators.

Active in aviation, Kylie came up to experience AirVenture in Oshkosh, WI many times. EAA captured what she loved about Cub Air Flight – an outreach to young and aspiring pilots, a passionate community, and planes flying everywhere.

Kylie often talked about how few female pilots there were and how she wanted more women to fly. She would hope the recipient of this scholarship be just as passionate and active as she was. The recipient of Kylie's scholarship will have the following characteristics similar to her:

- Woman ages 16 – 19
- Committed interest to earning an aviation-oriented college degree including, but not limited to, aviation management, professional flight, aviation maintenance, and aeronautical engineering
- Active in high school including a requirement that the recipient be a student-athlete, actively participating in at least one high school sport

"It can be overwhelming for a lot of people on the financial end [to fund aviation]," Geoff and Lisa Murray said. They chose to create the scholarship with EAA because they can offer direction on where to go and start. "It's wonderful that EAA can do that."

Kylie's evenings were best spent flying at sunset. We are reminded of her contribution to the aviation community with each sunset.

"She found a love," Geoff Murray said. "Up there, it really clicked."

