

There is one event from my childhood that has always stuck out to me as the first time I realized I wanted to be a pilot. For my birthday, my parents gave me a small model of a Blue Angel Jet. That toy was my pride and joy and it rarely left my side. I used to lie awake at night thinking about how one day I would become a pilot and soar as high as my dreams would take me. That was where it started. As I grew up I began to realize just how much I loved Alaska and the rural lifestyle that I had always lived. I wanted to continue this while still achieving my goal of becoming a pilot. This began my journey to become an Alaskan Bush Pilot.

I was born and raised in Kenny Lake Alaska in a small, one-room, dry cabin with my family of eleven. My family has always been financially well below the federal poverty level, but we never let that stop us from living full and happy lives. There have been many times when we have lived on wild game, beans and rice. In the winter when our water truck refuses to start at forty below, we melt snow for drinking water. These experiences have taught me persistence and resourcefulness.

When I was fifteen I received my first flight lesson. That day was one of the happiest of my life and for weeks after, I could think of nothing else. For the next few months I dedicated myself to studying aviation and working two jobs so that I could earn enough money to begin my flight training. When I was sixteen I began training for my private pilot license. Everyone at the airport knew how obsessed I was with everything aviation related and each of them helped out in their own way. On clear days I would ride along on mail delivery flights. When the weather was bad and the planes were grounded I would work in the hangar with the mechanic, or study groundschool with the pilots. This experience of seeing firsthand the essential role of aviation in rural Alaska cemented my commitment to become part of this work.

One of the most influential people in my life has been my Father. He has helped shape me into the person that I am today by instilling in me a deep sense of loyalty and commitment. Not only to myself and my career, but to the community in which I was raised. Another person that has inspired me to pursue a career in aviation is the owner of Copper Valley Air Service. From the very beginning of my training he has believed in me and supported my goals. He has shown me the importance of giving 100% to everything I do. Flying to him is not a job, it is a way of life. Thanks to him I now understand how important that difference is.

From a young age I have been working and saving money. I have had a wide variety of jobs and each has taught me a new set of skills and values. My work ranges from cutting firewood, shoveling snow, cooking/waitressing, farm work, to operating heavy equipment. I am currently signed up to work on a tour boat in Valdez for the summer of 2026. All of my employers have helped to impress upon me the value of a good work ethic, I would say that this is by far the most valuable skill I have learned.

I have spent the better part of my life either dreaming about or actively working towards becoming a pilot. I am self motivated and quick to learn any skill I set my mind to. Nothing ever came easy for me and I have had to work for everything I have. I love being able to use my own skills and determination to achieve what I set out to do. The money from this scholarship will start me on a path that will eventually help rural Alaskans by providing cargo and transportation to remote locations. With the ever growing demand for pilots, I think it only makes sense that I use my passion for aviation to help support the people who call Alaska their home. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be considered as a recipient of this scholarship.