

Private Jet Charter Company Awards Inaugural Pilot Scholarship

Orlando's Kimberly Novak receives the first-ever Pilot Training Scholarship from Stratos Jet Charters

ORLANDO, FL—Kimberly Novak used to hold down a pair of bar jobs in downtown Orlando, working six-day weeks to help cover the cost of flight school. Some of that financial burden has eased slightly now that she has been chosen as the recipient of the inaugural Pilot Training Scholarship from Stratos Jets, a local [private jet charter](#) company.

Valued at \$2,000, the bursary will help the 26-year-old Orlando resident cover a portion of the estimated \$80,000 cost of attending ATP Flight School at Daytona Beach International Airport (FAA ID: KDAB), which started in August. Combined with the hours she has already accumulated at another flight school at Orlando International Airport (KMCO), her training will likely exceed \$100,000.

Novak already holds an Associate of Science (A.S.) degree along with some credits toward a bachelor degree in business administration.

"I'm impressed by who Kimberly is as a person," says Joel Thomas, president of Stratos Jets. "You can see how hard she has worked to get where she's at, and I hope this scholarship will help her achieve the ultimate goal of becoming a professional pilot.

"She shows real initiative in seeking out businesses that are forward thinking, and she's trying to learn different aspects of the aviation industry."

In particular, Novak has earmarked the scholarship money to buy her first headset, and help cover tuition expenses.

"After working for the past several years to save the money required to enroll in full-time schooling, Stratos Jet Charters' generous scholarship will allow me to reach my funding goal and continue to chase my dream," she says.

Piloting wasn't exactly on Novak's list of potential career paths when she graduated from high school. In fact, she stumbled upon her new passion quite by accident during her freshman year at college.

"I bought a Groupon for a discovery flight and fell in love right there and then," smiles Novak, whose love of flying and exploration has taken her to 27 countries already.

“However, I was still attending a private college at the time and couldn’t attend both schools. I thought it would be best to come back to the flight school once I was a little older and a bit more financially stable.”

In between shifts at the bars in Orlando, Novak would take to the skies two or three times a week, with the goal of eventually earning her Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) certification.

“I would join aviation clubs and try to meet other pilots on the way,” says Novak. “I’m always trying to network and get guidance from peers.”

Novak has yet to decide whether she’ll fly commercially, or seek out a career with a private jet charter operator. She expects it will likely depend on where the demand is once she graduates.

“I’m very open-minded to any path,” she says. “Ultimately, I would like to be in cargo for Amazon, FedEx or UPS. However, that takes time and experience.”

Novak is proud to be entering a vocation that has been dominated by men since piloting first began. In more recent years, governing bodies have made a push to make it more inclusive and welcoming for both genders.

“Even 10 or 15 years ago, this may have been a struggle,” says Novak, on becoming a female pilot. “So far, I’ve met more than a dozen women in aviation and all have been absolutely wonderful to me.

“However, my mentors have been males who have been nothing but professional and have taken time out of their day to help me.”

In particular, Novak thanked Dr. Arnold Tillman, Patty Wagstaff, Thomas and her parents, Sherri Hughes and Grant Saso, for supporting her in achieving her goals.

“Without them, I wouldn’t be where I was now in aviation,” she says. “They helped mentor me through my fears and helped guided me through aviation.”

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About Stratos Jet Charters, Inc.

Stratos Jet Charters is a leading charter broker based in Orlando, Florida. We have more than a decade of experience in arranging private charter flights for clients across the United States, and around the world. By partnering with the most reputable operators, we provide clients with access to thousands of luxury jets in an array of sizes and performance capabilities. Our expert air charter associates are able to coordinate the flight plans to work with the client’s schedule and unique travel needs. To provide the highest standard of air charter safety, every charter

flight that we arrange is audited by an independent body such as ARG/US or Wyvern.

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