

AVIATOR ADVENTURERS



This page: Barrington Irving posing by his plane. Opposite: Glacier Girl, the celebrated P-38 that is part of the legendary Lost Squadron buried beneath 256 feet of Greenland ice cap, exposed.

Barrington Irving

The Kid Flies to Inspire

Jamaica-born Barrington Irving is the first person of African descent and the youngest pilot ever to fly solo 26,800 miles around the globe. He is all of 23. Still, the white-hot fire to achieve that blazes within the Florida Memorial University senior, who grew up in inner-city Miami, a clerk in his parents' Christian bookstore, is outwardly contained. "I consider myself a person who followed his passion," he says, simply.

Barrington's fireball of yearning was ignited at age 15 when a bookstore customer – a Jamaican airline pilot – invited the future adventurer to visit the cockpit of his United Airlines Boeing 777. That was it. In short order he had his private, commercial, instrument and flight instructor ratings. His transformation was astounding. From inner-city kid who shared a sense of hopelessness about his future (and believed a football scholarship the only ticket to success) to full-fledged aviator, launched into a world vastly larger and more

exciting than he ever thought possible.

He dreamed of a round-the-world flight – impossible for he had no plane. Not until he convinced aircraft parts manufacturers to donate just one of whatever they made until he had in his possession every last bolt required to assemble the phenomenal 400 the Columbia Aircraft corporation agreed to build for him. Next news from the boy wonder? He had taken off, his heading the aviation record books.

"After earning my first pilot's license I had the greatest feeling ever," he says. "I did not want to wait until I was 40 (to convince) other youths to experience the way aviation can touch your life because I'm not sure if I would have made it past 21 or even 25 in my neighborhood." He adds: "I wanted to fly around the world to show kids that I did it, and it didn't matter where I came from. If I had one opportunity to make a significant impact" I would show them: "There is a better alternative to the negative influences on the street."

For more information on Barrington, visit experienceaviation.org