

# SMART, BEAUTIFUL & TALENTED WOMEN AVIATORS

## Patty Wagstaff

### Best of the Best

It's hard to find anyone to which you can compare Patty Wagstaff. She was the first woman to win the U.S. National Aerobatics Championship when both men and women were allowed to compete against each other. She won the next year, as well. And the next. She would also win gold, silver and bronze medals in the Olympic-level international aerobatic competitions. No one was surprised when the Smithsonian asked to hang her airplane in the National Air & Space Museum.

Of course, Patty grew up around airplanes. Her dad was an airline captain, and when she was 10, he let her take the controls of his DC-6. Eventually, Patty would end up working in Alaska, traveling regularly by bush plane to remote villages. She couldn't think of a single reason why she couldn't be doing the flying herself. A year later, she got her private pilot's license (she did that in a float plane). And then, her commercial, seaplane and helicopter ratings, plus her CFII. Patty might not tell you, but everyone else will tell you—she can fly just about anything that she can coax into the air. She is the most sought-after air-show performer in the world.

An aviator with that level of talent can only dodge fame and recognition for so long. Patty was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame, alongside other inductees—like Neil Armstrong, Amelia Earhart and the Wright Brothers. She has also been honored with the United States Air Force Association Lifetime Achievement Award, the Katherine Wright Award, Bill Barber Award, the Air Show Hall of Fame and countless other awards.

In addition to a rigorous air-show performance schedule, Patty gives a lot back. For the last five years she has traveled to Kenya. There, she spends her time teaching pilots of the Kenya Wildlife Service how to fly in the bush, helping them patrol and conserve the country's biodiversity. And wherever you go in the world, there are countless people who will tell you about the time they first saw aviation's first lady of flying and how it inspired them to always give it all you've got.

Find more about Patty at [pattywagstaff.com](http://pattywagstaff.com).



Patty Wagstaff hangs on the straps of her Extra 300. An earlier Extra Patty flew now hangs in the Smithsonian.