



NEWS RELEASE

Two flight attendants earn coveted Elise Eberwein American Airlines Cadet Academy Pilot Scholarship

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Two American Airlines flight attendants are charting a new course — from the cabin to the flight deck — thanks to the Elise Eberwein American Airlines Cadet Academy Pilot Scholarship.

Kele Lowery, based in Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), and Courtney Rumbaugh, based in Miami (MIA), have been selected as this year's recipients of the prestigious scholarship, each receiving \$50,000 toward flight training. Now in its second year, the scholarship honors former American Airlines Executive Vice President Elise Eberwein's legacy by helping passionate and driven team members — particularly those with financial need — pursue their dreams of becoming pilots.

A PATHWAY TO THE FLIGHT DECK

Kele and Courtney's journeys began in the cabin, but their aspirations have always been on the flight deck. Both have experienced firsthand the dynamic and rewarding nature of aviation, gaining unique perspectives on teamwork, communication and operational excellence.

"Transitioning from flight attendant to pilot is a significant shift, but Kele and Courtney have demonstrated the passion, discipline and resilience necessary to make this leap," said Nathan Gatten, American's Executive Vice President of American Eagle, Corporate Real Estate and Government Affairs, who leads the teams managing the Cadet Academy. "Their commitment to aviation and their ability to lead and inspire others make them outstanding recipients of this scholarship."

MEET THE RECIPIENTS

Kele Lowery

DFW-based Flight Attendant

Hailing from Blaine, Tennessee, a small town in southern Appalachia, Kele has always dreamed big. For her, the scholarship is about more than just achieving a personal goal — it's about breaking barriers.

"I want to inspire little girls in small towns where there's not much professional opportunity," she said. "I'm proof that no matter where you come from, you can accomplish your wildest dreams with bravery and tenacity."

Working closely with pilots on flights fueled Kele's passion and solidified her decision to transition to the flight deck. "I was always the flight attendant who volunteered to sit in the flight deck during breaks," Kele shared. "What started as fascination quickly turned into a need for more knowledge. The more I learned, the more I knew this was the career path for me."

Courtney Rumbaugh

MIA-based Flight Attendant

Courtney's love for aviation is deeply personal, shaped by her upbringing near the Kennedy Space Center in Merritt Island, Florida. She started flight training before becoming a flight attendant but had to pause due to financial constraints.

"Becoming a flight attendant was a strategic move — I wanted to immerse myself in the industry and learn from those already at the controls," Courtney said. "It reinforced my desire to be a pilot and provided valuable insights into the airline world."

Scholarship in hand, she's ready to bring her cabin insights to the flight deck.

"I take enormous pride in knowing that when I get to the pilot's seat, I'll have a deep understanding of what my cabin crew is dealing with," she said. "This experience will make me a better communicator and leader."

FUELING THE FUTURE OF AVIATION

As American continues to invest in developing future aviators, the Elise Eberwein American Airlines Cadet Academy Pilot Scholarship is a testament to the company's commitment to career progression within the airline.

The program is a 10-year initiative that grants two scholarships each year. American team members who have a passion for the responsibilities of the flight deck are encouraged to apply when the next application cycle opens in the fourth quarter of 2025.