



NEWS RELEASE

Three generations, one airline and a century of flight

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A century after American Airlines first took to the skies, one family's journey comes close to mirroring its aviation evolution. It started in 1933, when Marie Allen, a young woman from Cincinnati, joined American's inaugural class of flight attendants. It was a time when the role called for a nursing license, an adventurous spirit and the ability to care for passengers in unpressurized cabins.

Sixteen years later, in 1949, her daughter, Jane Warren, earned her own wings as the industry entered a new era. And now, as American marks its 100th anniversary, Allen's granddaughter, Lisa Gregory, continues a three-generation legacy woven into American's history.

"I grew up hearing stories about my grandmother's and my mother's careers at American," Gregory said. "Being a flight attendant always sounded exciting to me, and honestly, American was the only airline I ever considered applying to."



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But 1984 was a far cry from 1933, when Gregory's grandmother first took to the skies. In the 1930s, flight attendants — then referred to as stewardesses — were required to be registered nurses, capable of caring for customers in an era when flying demanded equal parts courage and resilience.

"Flying was completely new," Gregory said. "My grandmother responded to a newspaper ad and showed up alongside 1,500 other applicants. She was initially told all the positions had already been filled."

But fate had other plans. American's President C.R. Smith happened to be there that day. When he learned Allen was a baby specialist at a hospital, he hired her on the spot. Allen and the other three flight attendants were soon flown to St. Louis for lunch with Charles Lindbergh and his wife, an early glimpse into the pioneering spirit of aviation.

"On her first day of training, they practiced takeoffs and landings all day out of Chicago Midway Airport. She was nauseous the entire time," said Gregory. "A flight from New York to Chicago took six hours, was loud and bumpy. At the time, it was a brand-new profession, and for a 23-year-old woman, it was a job completely unheard of. I admire my grandmother tremendously for what she did."

A profession and an industry evolve

Aviation had greatly evolved and become more commercialized by the time Gregory's mother began flying. She flew on Convair aircraft and later DC-4s, but the trips were still long and lacked air conditioning. By the time Lisa earned her wings in 1984, jets dominated the skies, and American was introducing the McDonnell Douglas MD-80, a mainstay of the fleet for decades to come.

Gregory, now based at LGA, had long known she would follow in her mother's and grandmother's footsteps at American. She was fascinated by the profession after hearing the stories they'd shared of their own experiences. As soon as she was old enough, she submitted an application through the mail and was invited to interview at San Diego International Airport.

"I still remember the day the acceptance envelope arrived," she recalled. "I knew then that I would become the third



generation in my family to fly for American — and the first third generation dating back to the original four.”

Gregory graduated on March 22, 1984, with 47 other flight attendants, and the ceremony included a surprise moment she’ll never forget. American had flown her mother and grandmother to the ceremony to pin on her wings.

“The press was there covering it, and that was the moment when everything truly came full circle and I realized the significance of what our family had been part of,” she said.

Another “full-circle moment” came more recently when Gregory had the opportunity to speak at the graduation of flight attendant Class 26-08 at American’s Robert L. Crandall campus. It was her first time attending a new hire graduation since her own. She reflected on her 43 years of service, which includes instructing security training in San Diego and teaching the “Excellence Through Leadership Purser Program” at DFW. Gregory shared that, above all, it’s the connections she’s made, unforgettable travel experiences and meaningful friendships she will cherish forever.

“I’ve met so many incredible people, both in the air and on the ground, and many of my closest friendships today came about through working here.”

Carrying on the legacy

Gregory said she’s far from done. People often ask if she’s ready to retire, but she’s quick to tell them, “I still love this job.” That love for aviation and travel, passed down from her mother and grandmother, extends to other members of her family as well. Her brother, Kevin, is a commercial-rated pilot, and her son, Jerry, works in aviation finance and is also a licensed pilot. While not a part of American themselves, they are helping to keep their family legacy going strong.

While the flight attendant profession has evolved over the generations, Gregory values the sense of adventure that drew her to the job decades ago.

“No two trips, passengers or days are ever the same,” she said. “From emergency situations to landing at airports I’ve never been to before, it’s the variety and the people that make the job so rewarding.”

From the daring first days of flight to today’s modern skies, Gregory’s historic journey reflects not only the evolution of an airline but also the enduring spirit of those who keep it flying.