

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

» Getting to Know  
COPA Pilots



**Laurie Einstein Koszuta** has been a freelance writer for many years and along with her husband, John, now owns a Cirrus SR22. With John as the pilot-in-command and Laurie as the partner, they regularly travel to see family, visit friends and enjoy our beautiful country. You can read more of Laurie's work on her website: [www.laurieeinsteinkoszuta.com](http://www.laurieeinsteinkoszuta.com).

## Late Start. Full Throttle.

by Laurie Einstein Koszuta

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**When Linda Rebrovick earned her private pilot certificate at age 68, she became the first pilot in her family and the embodiment of her own lifelong philosophy: always keep growing.** Today, the fifth-generation Nashvillian flies a 2019 Cirrus SR20 G6 out of John C. Tune Airport (KJWN), is working on her instrument rating and is savoring every new challenge.

Long before she ever touched a flight control, Linda was already charting bold paths in the business world. Armed with a degree from Auburn University, she joined IBM in 1977, a time when few women were selling computers, and quickly advanced from frontline sales to management and leadership roles. Those early experiences established two themes that would define her life: a relentless desire to learn and



≡ **Linda Rebrovick with the 2019 SR20 G6** which she had the opportunity to purchase with three other partners.

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a deep satisfaction in helping others achieve more than they imagined possible.

“My early career at IBM set the foundation for everything that followed,” Linda said. After a 16-year tenure, she went on to lead consulting teams at KPMG and BearingPoint, serve on seven corporate and private company boards and eventually run a technology company. Recruited by investors to lead a software firm, she drew on her business-to-business expertise to guide it to profitability. When the company later shifted toward a consumer market outside her area of expertise, she helped the board recruit a successor and became a board member.

“I had a deep desire to give back to the community I loved, and that is what led me into public life,” she said. “Several friends encouraged me to run for mayor of Nashville in 2015. I was motivated by a vision of a smarter, more connected city,

one that used technology, data and connected infrastructure to improve the quality of life for our citizens.”

## Harvard Turning Point

Although she didn’t win the campaign, it prepared her for future challenges. That challenge came six years later in 2021, when she attended Harvard University’s Advanced Leadership Initiative, an immersive eight-month fellowship in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The cohort consisted of 60 fellows from around the world, accomplished in their careers, committed to their communities and who were at Harvard to develop a social impact project.

“My husband was on board with my temporary move from Nashville to live on campus during those eight months,” she said, noting that the decision was made easier since their son,

» **Linda with DPE Randy Harmon**  
after passing her check ride and  
earning her private pilot certificate in  
June 2024.



Tripp, is a director of the Harvard Debate Council on campus, allowing her to be in proximity to him at that time. Being in the college environment also deepened her awareness of brain health and the importance of continuing to challenge her mind.

### Learning for Brain Health

After that experience, Linda wanted to dive into higher-level learning for brain health.

“I wanted to do something that involved complex decision-making, problem-solving and multitasking,” she said. That “something” led directly to aviation, an earlier passion Linda had long stored away.

“I had considered taking lessons decades ago,” Linda said, “especially after I saw a video of a sales rep at IBM that had done something unique. He was standing with his arm on the wing of his plane, explaining how flying allowed him to reach customers more quickly and efficiently. He didn’t have to deal with commercial flights, and he clearly loved the freedom and value it brought to his work. I checked into flight instruction right after that, but the time commitment, availability and financial resources weren’t right then, so I let it go.”

Years later, aviation left still another mark on her life in an

unforgettable way. On Sept. 11, 2001, Linda was flying from Nashville to Washington, D.C., for meetings at BearingPoint when the Pentagon was struck. “9/11 was a life-changing experience,” she recalled. “Everything about air travel changed that day, from the airport security and sense of freedom to the way we thought about flying.”

Those events were traumatic and Linda re-evaluated general aviation as a different option for travel. In 2001, the timing still wasn’t right to take flight lessons. However, after attending the Harvard program, the idea of learning to fly resurfaced.

### Rediscovering a Dormant Dream

“I have three close friends, Amanda Farnsworth, Kevin Crumbo and Mike Forster, who were experienced Cirrus pilots,” Linda offered. “They just kept telling me that I would love flying.”

During one right-seat flight with Kevin Crumbo, she said, “Wow, I really do love this.” She then casually remarked that she enjoyed the flight but had probably “missed her window of opportunity” to become a pilot because she was in her late 60s.

“He corrected me immediately and pointed out that in aviation there’s no age limit, only milestones and training standards,” she recalled.

» **Linda** shares that she refers to herself as “Air Nonna” to her two grandsons; maybe one day they will be interested in learning how to fly.

That conversation was eye-opening enough for Linda to go to Nashville’s John C. Tune Airport and take a discovery flight with veteran pilot and instructor Bobby Joslin.

“I was instantly hooked,” she said. “But to avoid any surprises later with my medical certificate, I made an appointment for a medical exam before committing to lessons.”

She easily passed the medical and during her early flights, tried flying in a Cessna 172 but quickly realized the plane wasn’t a good fit – literally.

“I couldn’t reach the rudder pedals, and it was so hot in the cabin I thought I’d melt,” she laughed. “I also couldn’t reach the fuel tanks on the high-wing plane, and I kept thinking that I would need to carry a ladder with me everywhere. It didn’t feel right for a short, petite woman like myself.”

## A Cirrus Made Sense

With her background in technology and computers and decades spent with data-driven systems, she wanted to learn to fly a Cirrus.

“I told my flight instructor that I was committed to training in the airplane I intended to fly,” Linda said. “The aircraft, a 2019 SR20 G6 with Garmin Perspective+, was privately owned and part of the school’s fleet.”



By spring 2023, she was in formal training at Frequency Change Aviation in Nashville with instructor Natalie Deitrick. She soloed that October and, after a weather-delayed check ride with DPE Randy Harmon, earned her private pilot certificate in June 2024.

“During my training, the owner decided to move up to an SR22T and sell the airplane,” she said. “I was concerned since it was the only SR20 in the flight school at that time.”

Fortunately, the story didn’t end there. Jeff Ramsey, president of Frequency Change Aviation, stepped in to find three partners to purchase the plane with Linda, ensuring it remained in his school’s flight program and available for her and other students to use.

“I felt right at home with the glass panel because of my background in computers. It was logical and intuitive, and I loved the focus on safety, especially CAPS, and the comfort of heat and air conditioning,” Linda added with a grin.

### Training With Purpose

From the start, Linda’s instructor was clear that the Cirrus was a high-performance airplane and that it would take more time to learn. “But she understood where I was coming from,” Linda said, “and felt that with my background in technology and computers, it would be easier.”

Linda approached flying the way she had approached her corporate career: methodically and with purpose. She built checklists, studied systems and moved systematically through each stage of her training.

“The training required me to master avionics, communications, aerodynamics and navigation simultaneously,” she said. “You can’t learn one piece at a time. It forces you to think in three dimensions.”

She typically flies twice a week, weather permitting, logging time toward her instrument rating and exploring the Tennessee countryside and areas around Kentucky and Alabama.

“The Cumberland River from the air is breathtaking,” she said. “Every flight reminds me how beautiful this part of the country is.”

*“I felt right at home with the glass panel because of my background in computers. It was logical and intuitive ...”*

### Flying Smart and Safe

“I have great respect for the process,” Linda said.

She uses a structured syllabus, studies thoroughly on the ground, and is deliberately conservative in her risk management. For trips longer than about two hours or to unfamiliar destinations, she prefers to bring an instructor or experienced pilot along, always keeping a backup airline ticket available. Hence, she never feels any “get-there-itis” pressure. If the backup ticket is not needed, she cancels it.

“There are copilots in commercial jets for a reason,” Linda said. “I like having another set of eyes and ears in the cockpit. I’m still building experience, but I’m having fun doing it. My goal is to get to the point where I don’t feel I need anyone else with me and can take passengers without worrying about taking on such a significant responsibility.”

Linda joined COPA while still a student pilot and attended her first CPPP in Knoxville before earning her certificate. “The safety content of that event was incredible and everyone was so supportive,” she said.

Now approaching 70, Linda calls herself “Sky Queen” and “Air Nonna” to her two grandsons, names that capture both her playful side and the pride she feels in taking on something big at this stage of life. No one in her family had ever flown before, but she’s proud to have changed that. Her husband, Art, and two adult children, Leigh and Tripp, are equally proud of her accomplishment.

“You’re never too old to learn something new,” she said. “Aviation challenges me, fulfills me and keeps me growing.” ⊕