

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Ninety-Nines Loses Last Charter Members

Oklahoma City, OK

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The Ninety-Nines, International Organization of Women Pilots, lost its last two charter members. Margaret Thomas Warren passed away on August 22, 2004, in Castletownshend, Cork County, Ireland, and Josephine Wood Wallingford died in Vernon, TX, on September 11, 2004.

At age 17, Margaret Thomas was one of the youngest charter members of The 99s. She learned to fly at the Texas Air Transport Flying School in Fort Worth, earning pilot license no. 6180 in early 1929 in an OX-5 Travelair. She worked for Curtiss-Wright at Love Field as a demonstration pilot. Later that year she went to New York's Roosevelt Field and by early 1930 joined the Curtiss-Wright Exhibition Company stunt team.

At the second meeting of The 99s, she was appointed to represent Texas. Soon, Thomas was married but the marriage only lasted two years. She returned to Texas and married pilot Bayard Warren and had two children. The family moved to Maine where Margaret began writing a book based upon some of her aviation experiences. After moving to Ireland, her book, "Taking Off," was published in 1993 in England.

Josephine "Jody" Wood, born in Vernon TX, was also 17 when she joined The 99s. She earned Limited Commercial pilot license no. 9129 in September, 1929, in an OX-5 powered Swallow at Clover Field in Santa Monica, CA, and with her sister Frances, the Wood sisters formed a flying team. In 1931, she had the distinction of riding in an open convertible with Amelia Earhart at a parade held in conjunction with the Chicago Air Races. She later told family that Amelia was very quiet during the ride, owing to her shyness, and that she enjoyed just watching Amelia wave to the crowd.

Her 2-year, 1935 marriage produced one son and the end of her flying career, but she never lost her love for flying. Her son, Fred Wallingford, said that his mother knew she couldn't fly again so she just stopped talking about it though the lessons learned influenced her as she became a successful businesswoman in later years. Wallingford recounted that his mother said the two biggest obstacles women pilots faced in the late 1920s were questions about their reputations and the ever-present question, why? Said Wallingford, "Jody said they just wanted to fly."



Margaret Thomas Warren, circa 1930

The 99s, founded in 1929 to provide networking and support to women pilots, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization under the United States Internal Revenue Code. Its unique name comes from the total number of women who joined the club as charter members. Of 117 licensed women pilots in the United States, 99 joined the organization.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Lisa Cotham

Public Relations Chairman

225-932-5918

www.ninety-nines.org

PR@ninety-nines.org

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