

# THE WATCH



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# Keeping Our Skies Safe Every Day



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AFL-CIO

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# PWC

Professional Women Controllers, Inc.  
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**PWC Purpose:** The purpose of Professional Women Controllers, Inc. (PWC) is to encourage women to enter the air traffic control profession; assist in professional and personal development; maintain accountability, responsibility, and professionalism; and promote a better understanding, cooperation and coordination among individuals toward the continual improvement of aviation safety.

**PWC Vision:** PWC's vision is to achieve a balanced workforce that reflects the demographics of society and creates a safe environment where all air traffic professionals have passion for their career, can excel, and feel a sense of community at work.

**PWC Mission:** PWC is a resource that provides support, training, encouragement, and camaraderie for all air traffic professionals. PWC advocates balancing work and family life, recruiting and retaining excellent employees, developing people, enjoying work, and maintaining a positive sense of community.

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*Congrats to the new board!*

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**COVER PHOTO** Jon Ross Photography

The WATCH, a benefit of membership in the Professional Women Controllers, Inc., is published quarterly.

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# View from the Tower

By Jenn Dempster, Professional Women Controllers (PWC) President

Hola familia PWC,

We are coming to the end of this chapter of another wonderful year of PWC History. Our amazing history continues to be written by your Board of Directors and everyone who is a part of this organization. The hard work and dedication continues to make our story great! This year we have expanded our family with 57 new members and six new sponsors. We've hosted three "We Want You" webinars, 8 social events, and attended 5 conferences promoting PWC. This is along with numerous other events we have participated in during Women's History Month and throughout the year. There is so much to be proud of!

This year we celebrated 45 years of PWC in San Juan, Puerto Rico. If you were not able to join us please check out many of the highlights that are captured in the most recent edition of The WATCH. I cannot begin to thank the local and planning teams for organizing an amazing conference in a breathtaking location. The feedback we received speaks to an overwhelming success that had everyone leaving with Caribbean Synergy.

I also cannot say enough about the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) event that was held in conjunction with the conference in Puerto Rico. PWC partnered with the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE), the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE), all the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Service Units, UFA, and Infina to host an absolutely energizing event on the south ramp at San Juan International Airport (SJU). There were numerous aircraft on static display including the FAA's flight check aircraft, FedEx ATR, and a few helicopters. Our interactive exhibitors included Airport Rescue and Fire Fighter trucks, Air Traffic Control (ATC) virtual reality opportunities, Technical Operations display, career development opportunities among many others. Together we influenced the lives of over 275 participants with 110 volunteers and more than 50 support crew from the airport. This event laid a foundation of many more events to come.

Next year is shaping up to be just as exciting as this one. The conference team is well underway planning the next conference scheduled for April 10-13, 2024 in Louisville, KY. We will "Run Your Own Race" as we celebrate 46 years of PWC together. Hotel rooms for the conference are already available and can be booked by selecting the name of the hotel on the PWC Website under the conference tab.

I personally want to thank everyone who submitted their online and in-person election votes. If you did not receive a ballot this year and are a voting member, please reach out to Tawni Pettigrove to ensure we have your correct information. Please join me in congratulating the elected members of the 2023-2024 PWC Board of Directors:

President: Jennifer Dempster

Secretary: Jessica Byrum

Membership Director: Tawni Pettigrove

Eastern Regional Director: Wendy Stevens

Great Lakes Regional Director: Rachel Parramore

Central Regional Director: Bethany Bohnenstiehl

In closing, I am excited and honored to serve another term as your PWC President. Together we will keep the forward momentum of PWC's mission vision and purpose. Each and every one of us have a seat at the table, let's make it count!

*Jenn*



# EDITOR'S NOTE



¡Bienvenidos! Welcome! I am excited to report that this is my fourth edition as Managing Editor for The WATCH, making it to my one year anniversary! I feel we have done a great job expanding our reach and have no shortage of content. We have included a wide spread of articles showcasing our member's involvement, achievements and connections. I know this next year will only improve on what we have already built. On that note, if you want to contribute or would like to get involved in The WATCH, contact me at [pwcinc.watch@gmail.com](mailto:pwcinc.watch@gmail.com).

Unfortunately, I was not able to make the 2023 PWC Conference in Puerto Rico, but with good reason; my husband and I recently welcomed our second baby! The adjustment has been a challenge but a welcome one.

It has been great to edit this edition and read the recaps from the Conference. I hope you enjoy your Summer edition of The WATCH!

*Alicia Barry Whitman*  
WATCH MANAGING EDITOR

SUMMER 2023



## IN THIS ISSUE

We are highlighting many exciting moments and announcements for PWC. In this issue you will read about our PWC Conference in Puerto Rico as recounted by our board and membership. We also welcome our new PWC Board and are excited to see their impact moving forward. Additionally, the 2023 PWC Scholarship winners have been announced!



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# NEW ARRIVALS



Jeremy Ferg, IL

Madeline Snively-Imboden, IL

Jennifer Hoover, TN

Allison Gibson, IL

James Watkins, IL

Delfina Jensen, TX

Avery Hackler, IL

Suzanne Remetio, MO

Brian Krinner, TX

Renee Neer, IL

Sabrina Robinson, NY

Amanda Sutton, TX

Omar Ramirez, IL

Jennifer Malloy, OH

Lynette Gebhardt, VA

Tamekia Puckett-Parnell, IL

Tamara Sabalier, PR

Adrian Hansen, VA

Michael Ruffle, IL

Dominique Russell, SC

Jonathan Mathisen, VA

Welcome to the PWC family!

PWC membership benefits can be found at [pwcinc.org/membership](http://pwcinc.org/membership)

Please reach out to Tawni Pettigrove, PWC Membership Director at [pwcmembershipdirector@gmail.com](mailto:pwcmembershipdirector@gmail.com) with any questions regarding membership.





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Written By: Dennis Edmonds, ChFEBCsm  
President & CEO

## 5.5 Steps to Maximize Your Benefits and Win Retirement *for every career stage.*

Whether you are Early career, Mid-career, Pre retiree, or Retirement ready, as a federal employee, you are provided with excellent benefits to take care of you and your family. But they are complex and need to be managed along the way. If you don't address your benefits at every career stage, you may leave money on the table or miss out on important benefits for you and your family. While you might be seeking it, there is no magic strategy or product. Getting the most out of your benefits and winning retirement is about planning ahead. You should plan ahead so your life will unfold the way you picture it. After all, people who plan ahead have better results and live more enjoyable lives than those who wing it. Don't you agree?

Here are five and a half steps – actions you can take – to maximize your benefit and win retirement so when the time comes, you can make the best decisions about your benefits and retirement. I encourage you read this with a highlighter! Let's get started.

### 1. Create Intentional Success

If you want something you've never had you have to do something you've never done. Retirement will be a new experience for you. Preparing yourself for this new stage in your life is an important step in ensuring its success.

Did you know there are actually three stages of retirement?

- Go-go years - when you get to do everything on your list that you've been waiting to do until you retired.
- Slow-go years - You don't quite have the energy any more to do all the activities you used to do. You stay closer to home and spend more time with family.
- No-go years - At this stage, much of your life comes down to managing chronic medical conditions. Lots of doctor visits and quality time with your family.

As you might imagine, each of these stages requires a different financial plan. Clearly you can see that you would have to Create a new way to live to win retirement. Intentional. You want to be successful because of the things that you've done and not because you got lucky. There is nothing wrong with getting lucky, but you want your success to be based on your decisions and not the market cooperating or the stars aligning. Finally, Success. If you don't know where you're going any road will take you there. It's important to define what success looks like. It can be very general or very specific but it's important to know what success looks like.

### 2. Consider the 4 Big Rocks

One of the costliest things that can happen financially is a surprise. By planning and anticipating the coming of obstacles, you'll take their power away when they arrive. There are '4 big rocks', or big obstacles, that you may face throughout your career and retirement that will keep you from living the life that you've imagined. The first rock is knowing when you can retire, how much money you'll have, and what you can do to influence that amount of money. The second rock is what happens if you live too long? Is there a danger of outliving your money and becoming a burden to your family? How can you protect yourself from never outliving your income? The third rock is the opposite. What happens if you die too soon? Perhaps you don't even make it to retirement. Will your family be OK? Will they be able to continue their lives in the same lifestyle that they've become accustomed to? The last rock is what if you get sick along the way? If you are unable to work, chances are your income will be reduced significantly. Will your family still be able to pay your mortgage, utilities, and groceries? Will you still be able to recover and retire on time? These are the four big obstacles you may face.

### 3. Do your Homework

The third step to winning retirement just like winning any financial venture is doing your homework. When you are better informed of the issues you will be facing, you'll have a better opportunity to make the best decisions. Part of doing your homework is knowing your numbers. Understanding where you stand will give you a pretty good idea of where you'll wind up. What you've done to get to where you are will not necessarily be sufficient to get you to where you are going. You must





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learn if the things that you're doing today will get you to where you want to go. Ask yourself: Is my rate of savings sufficient to build a bucket big enough to take care of my family through retirement? Is my coverage sufficient to protect my family if I die too soon or get sick along the way? While there are plenty of experts that can help you solve these problems, the planning process starts with you understanding where you are. And now a brief commercial break.

You may have heard of the **Federal Benefits Information Center** because we're the ones that are responsible for conducting your required Benefits Briefings and Service Talks for your team. We also developed the **CABS report**. That's a Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary. It will take a snapshot of all your benefits including your FERS annuity, TSP, FEGLI insurance coverage, and a Family Benefits Overview – all in one personal report. You should have been receiving this report every year, but we can't go back. We're here to make sure that you receive it every year to and through retirement. Visit [www.FederalBenefitsInfo.com](http://www.FederalBenefitsInfo.com) for your free report. And now, back to our regularly scheduled seminar.

#### 4. Run a Simulator

Step 4 in winning retirement is to run a simulator. You probably remember when you were in elementary school you participated in a fire drill. The bells would go off, and everyone in your class would line up. Then you would march out to the parking lot with your teacher in front, and you would stand in your designated area until the all-clear was given. Today, schools still run their fire drills. What I find interesting is that I can't remember the last time I heard about a fire at an elementary school. So why do they still run fire drills? Of course, the answer is quite simple. If it ever happened, it would be absolutely a tragedy. And if the kids didn't know what to do in advance of that event, it would be even more tragic. Even if it may seem unlikely that it could happen, if you're prepared for it, the outcome will be better than if you are not prepared. Remember the 4 Rocks? Imagine running a simulator for you and your family for when you can retire. Or, if you were to live too long. Or if you died too soon. Or if you got sick along the way. While it's not an exact science, if you anticipate what could go right and what could go wrong you will be more prepared to deal with it when it happens. It might also be fun to learn about what everybody says about you after you died too soon. All kidding aside, will your family's life unfold the way you picture it? Do you have all the necessary pieces of paper that will make that happen? Do you have an updated last will, trust, and a living will? Do you have a good plan in place for how to retire the way you picture it? How about your other benefits?

#### 5. Create a Transition Plan

An important action to ensure you win retirement and maximize your benefits is to create a transition plan. People who plan ahead have better results and live more enjoyable lives than those who wing it. Wouldn't you agree? You've planned your career throughout your life. Sometimes life changes, and you must change your plans. Perhaps you've changed jobs, had a child, got married or divorced. What does retirement look like for you? It may have changed from your image of it 20 years ago. If you spend a bit of time and have an idea of what will happen throughout your retirement you have a higher likelihood of it being successful. Once you have your plan of what retirement might look like for you, it's important that you have a transition plan. Going from working every day, receiving a paycheck, surrounded by colleagues, eating lunch at a particular time, at a particular place, having responsibilities and jobs to do, maybe having responsibility over other people, filing reports, sitting in meetings, getting up early and dressed each day, to a completely new lifestyle.

Maybe now there's no alarm clock. You can eat lunch whenever you want. You may not be responsible for a team anymore. The meetings go away. So does the recognition. That's quite a change. If you plan for this change by going through a transition it will be more successful, acceptable, and enjoyable when it happens. Some people are very excited about entering retirement because they have their list of all the things they want to accomplish, all the places they want to go, and all the activities they want to do. Back in the day, retirement just included the last few years of your life. When Social Security was introduced, the average person only spent between five and seven years in retirement. Now it is possible that you could spend 25 years, 30 years, or more in retirement. It's not just your last few years anymore. Will you work? Will you





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be involved with charities? Will you become a caregiver for other family members? Will you travel? Here's an interesting tidbit. The day you retire, you will be as wealthy as you'll ever be in your life. You will be as smart as you've ever been in your life. You will be as experienced and competent as you've ever been in your life. You will also have access to many resources. Wait. As wealthy as you'll ever be in your life? Think about this for a minute. If a rich uncle from California died and left you a \$2 million inheritance that was deposited into your checking account, would you feel any different this morning? Would you spend your money differently? Of course, you would. There is a challenge for new retirees to make sure they don't live above their means. Remember that second big rock? What happens if you live too long? Will you outlive your money? Before my mom passed, I asked her why she bought such expensive furniture for her home. She said, "I bought that when I thought I was rich." How true. Plan ahead and make sure that your transition is reasonable and realistic while still being exciting and adventurous. A transition will make your change in lifestyles much easier.

### **5.5 Bonus Step! Get Expert Advice**

I must squeeze one more into our list. Those were the five steps to maximize your benefits and win retirement. This last step is crucial for so many reasons. Get expert advice. Do not rely on the expert advice of the colleague who works next to you. One doesn't go into the doctor's office and say, "Give me a prescription for this particular drug because I know what's wrong with me." The doctor would have to do an exam first to professionally diagnose what's wrong and what needs to happen to improve your situation. This is what a quality Financial Professional does for you. We would be honored to represent you and take you through this planning process, so you have better results and live a more enjoyable life. You should start with knowing your numbers, diagnosing your situation by considering what information is revealed in your **CABS report**. You remember, the Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary. What you do with that information is entirely up to you, but it is important that you have advanced notice about what you are doing and where it will lead you. If we meet just prior to your retirement and you discover you didn't save the right amount, or in the right place, or in the right way, it's too late to do anything about it. Get help, get professional assistance. If not from us, from someone, soon.

We believe there are 5 ½ steps you can take to maximize your benefits and win retirement. Create intentional success, Consider the four big rocks, Do your homework, Run a simulator, and Create a transition plan. And don't forget the last half step, Seek professional advice.

Just a reminder... If you keep doing what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got. So, if you want something you've never had, you'll have to do something you've never done. We stand ready to help you maximize your benefits and win retirement. Visit our website at [www.federalbenefitsinfo.com](http://www.federalbenefitsinfo.com) and request your CABS report right away. As Henry David Thoreau said, "Go confidently into the direction of your dreams and live the life you have imagined." Cheers!

*About the Author: **Dennis Edmonds, ChFEBC<sup>SM</sup>**, of Bradenton, Florida, is a veteran of the financial service industry with over 3 decades of experience. Starting his career with a Fortune 100 company, he developed his career as a business development strategist in industries ranging from financial services to healthcare. With an emphasis on education, Dennis has been able to enrich client experiences, streamline process improvements and develop innovative approaches to financial security. He was responsible for program design, financing, implementation, and administration of several private financial practices.*

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## 8 FACTS ABOUT FEDERAL EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE (FEPLI)

The federal workforce has a lot to navigate, to say the least. The experience of difficult coworkers is not limited to any sector or industry. The potential for politics to affect office life so directly is a more unique experience. It's not as simple as it can look from the outside.

Disagreements and mistakes in the workplace happen. And at times, these complications can threaten your federal career. When they do? It's likely time to turn to your Federal Employee Professional Liability Insurance (FEPLI).

So what should everyone know about FEPLI?

### 1. It covers you when someone makes an allegation against you, in relation to your federal job

Let's start with the basics. FEPLI covers your federal career. It works when someone makes an allegation of wrongdoing or misconduct against you. This allegation must be in relation to your federal job.

Some general examples?

Investigations arising out of EEOC complaints against you. Allegations of misuse of government property or conduct unbecoming. Challenges against gaining or renewing your security clearance. Civil lawsuits (yes, feds can be personally sued). And more.

FEPLI does not cover allegations you wish to make against someone else.

### 2. It began in 1965, invented for employees of the U.S. Federal government

In the tumultuous sixties, Frank Wright was an insurance professional in Washington, DC. He noticed that the federal government employees around him faced a lot of risks - often. He saw them exposed to situations that could endanger their careers.

If anything happened against them, the employee had to pay out of pocket for a private lawyer.

Seeing the need, Wright established Wright & Co. With it, he invented professional liability insurance for U.S. federal employees. The insurance, now known as FEPLI, was born with the unique needs of the federal sector in mind. The company, today known as Starr Wright USA, began with federal workers as the sole focus. They remain the sole focus today.

### 3. It is for ANY civilian federal employee

All U.S. federal sector employees are eligible to enroll in FEPLI. There is no waiting period or other limitation: you could enroll on your first day on the job if you chose. You can enroll no matter what agency you work for.

Anyone can accuse a fed of some wrongdoing or another, at any time. And unfortunately, allegations don't have to be true to be harmful.

If you face an allegation at work, you must prove yourself innocent, or seek fair and reasonable repercussions. This can be difficult and confusing. That's why FEPLI is available to any fed who wants it.

### 4. Managers, supervisors, LEOs, and others with similar jobs may need it more

Any fed can benefit from having FEPLI. However, it's true that some are statistically more likely to file a claim than others. The more exposure you have on the job, the greater your chances of needing to file an FEPLI claim. Hiring, firing, and disciplining employees. Working in close contact with the public. Jobs with high-stakes or extra security or secrecy. All these and more mean an increased risk.

## 5. You can get reimbursed – it's that important

Federal agencies are required by law to reimburse qualified federal employees for a part of their annual FEPLI cost.

The law names Law Enforcement Officers, Managers, and Supervisors as qualified. But across the government, exact qualification requirements vary. Many things come into consideration, including on your responsibilities, agency, and exposure. In some cases, you may qualify even if you are not a manager or LEO.

The dollar amount or percentage reimbursed also varies: the law calls for up to 50% or up to \$150. However, some agencies or positions reimburse more.

FEPLI reimbursement is on the federal level. It is not offered or determined by the insurance companies. Your agency's HR department can provide specifics as they pertain to your role.

## 6. It is private insurance, and individuals must enroll themselves

FEPLI is a great benefit to federal employees. But, getting it works a little differently from other employee benefits. FEPLI is not part of the standard employee benefits package. It is not automatically provided, and you cannot enroll through your employer.

To have FEPLI coverage, each employee must select and enroll in a policy themselves.

The same also goes for payment and reimbursement. It is up to you to pay for your own FEPLI policy, and to request reimbursement from your agency.

## 7. You must have an active policy before an incident occurs to file a claim

Like health or auto insurance, FEPLI won't cover a claim for a situation that started before you were covered.

Of course, you never plan to get into a fender-bender, or become ill. You also rarely expect to be in a scenario where your career is in jeopardy. Unfortunately, unexpected things happen.

Some feds assume that FEPLI is not worth having – until they are facing down an allegation at work. The annual price of carrying coverage – and knowing you have that protection available – is low. The price of an unforeseen allegation against you can be high.

## 8. Determine what it is that you want to engage with and begin to research these higher-order ideas.

Most FEPLI policies include access to a legal counsel line for some set amount of time. You can use that resource to speak to a legal advisor when you have an issue that wouldn't be a covered insurance claim. Or, when you don't have a claim yet – but you're concerned it could happen.

Starr Wright USA offers the best option for this. All our FEPLI policies include 4 full hours of access to the Pre-Claim Counsel line. This hotline connects you with a legal expert dedicated to federal employment matters. Use this whenever and however you need during your active policy period.

Learn more about FEPLI from Starr Wright at [www.wrightusa.com](http://www.wrightusa.com).

PWC members receive a special member discount.



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# WOMEN OF THE COMMAND CENTER

## PART THREE

By Alicia Barry Whitman, WATCH Managing Editor

### INSIDE THE SYSTEM

In the Winter 2022 edition of The WATCH, we started to take a closer look at the happenings inside the David J. Hurley Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC or Command Center). As a review, the ATCSCC's overall goal is to balance air traffic demand with system capacity; it identifies inefficiencies and collaboratively finds solutions with facilities and stakeholders. Constraints can be weather, equipment outages, runway closures and emergencies. To mitigate impacts to the system, traffic management initiatives (TMIs) such as airborne metering, ground delay programs, ground stops, miles-in-trail, reroutes, and airspace flow programs are used. These TMIs are used to minimize delays and effectively manage the flow of air traffic. But what about the "nitty-gritty" of the operation?

In Part-One, we learned about the duties of Terminal and Severe Weather National Traffic Management Specialists (NTMS). These positions may implement programs such as a Ground Delay Program to assist in the more efficient use of airspace. In Part-Two we dove into the National Traffic Management Officer and Support Specialist positions. Both positions work closely with facilities and stakeholders to ensure things are running properly. In this edition, we are taking a look at Central Altitude Reservation Function (CARF).

### CENTRAL ALTITUDE RESERVATION FUNCTION (CARF)



F-35 Refueling

Andrea Chrouser is a CARF (Central Altitude Reservation Function) Specialist. This function of the Command Center works under Space Operations (AJR-1800) and primarily has military, international and space duties. Andrea has been a CARF Specialist for eight of her 22 year tenure with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). She started her career at Albuquerque Air Traffic Control Center (ZAB) as an En Route controller where she was first introduced to the complexity

of our military's operations within the National Airspace System (NAS).

CARF is responsible for processing military and civil altitude reservation (ALTRV) requests through coordination with FAA and international facilities. They also issue ALTRV approvals for the mass movement of aircraft, missile activities, space launches, large force exercises and other activities which warrant special handling in the domestic and/or international air traffic control systems. An ALTRV is reserved airspace used for mass movement or other user requirements that cannot be otherwise accomplished on a standard flight plan. This can include a block-altitude spanning multiple facilities. CARF detects and resolves conflicts between ALTRV requests before they are approved and creates and disseminates Notices to Airman/Missions for approved ALTRVs.



Bomber

Working in CARF is a unique experience. The most rewarding part of the job is working with respected and professional organizations like the Department of Defense and Commercial Space operators to assist them in achieving their goals. We assist the military in moving aircraft around the world and coordinate airspace for rocket and missile testing for our national security. CARF is at an exciting juncture where they get to witness the commercial space industry and spaceflight evolve, satellite infrastructure grow and be a part of history as we explore faraway places like Mars.



Minuteman III Ballistic Missile



Falcon Heavy Launch





# Recent “Close Calls” Heighten FAA Scrutiny

By FEDS Protection

As federal air traffic controllers, Professional Women Controllers (PWC) members provide a valuable service by ensuring the safety of pilots, staff, and airline passengers. Since the beginning of 2023, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has experienced a number of flight-related close calls. These incidents prompted an intense amount of scrutiny and increased focus on the FAA from Congress, the media, and the public, spurring the agency to convene an independent safety review team to look for ways to boost air safety. The hope is that this team will be able to identify specific investments that can be made to improve air safety and the National Airspace System.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg recently warned that the United States could not wait for the next “catastrophic event” before addressing the uptick in dangerous aviation events. There have been six serious runway incidents since January, prompting the agency to convene a separate safety summit in March. For example, in February, a FedEx cargo plane and a Southwest Airlines flight came within 100 feet of each other. Having several of these close calls heightens the attention placed on all air traffic controllers.

Federal air traffic controllers are being looked at under a magnifying glass, leaving them vulnerable to allegations that may lead to discipline, complaints, or lawsuits. While the FAA is the premier air safety agency in the world, the agency and its employees are also vulnerable to intense scrutiny from Congress and the media. If an allegation is made against you, it is a necessity, not luxury, to have knowledgeable and effective counsel advocating on your behalf. Your agency attorney is not your attorney. It is the job of the agency attorney to defend the agency – not you. As a federal air traffic controller, you need to have counsel that has specific experience representing federal employees with your professional vulnerabilities. A FEDS Protection professional liability insurance (PLI) policy can help.

For administrative matters, your FEDS policy will pay for legal defense – up to \$200,000 per incident – to defend you in agency investigative or disciplinary actions arising from actions taken in the scope of your employment at the agency level and the MSPB. FEDS Protection also provides \$1 million, \$2 million, or \$3 million in coverage for civil suits resulting from actions taken in the scope of your federal employment, as well as \$100,000 in coverage for criminal investigations arising from actions taken in the scope of your employment.

To learn more about how a FEDS PLI policy can protect you and your career, visit [www.fedsprotection.com](http://www.fedsprotection.com) or call (866) 955-FEDS, M-F 8:30am-6pm to speak directly to a representative. Professional Women Controllers members can use the code “PWC” for a discount on your FEDS Protection PLI Policy.



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# A Dip in the Learning Curve

By Michael Hitch Combe, Managing Editor - Managing the Skies™,  
FAAMA Foundation Chair

**T**hroughout your life you are constantly on several learning curves. Some are just the way you interact with life in general. You are in a regular state of learning about your life and your day to day activities. Through these experiences you make small adjustments to your daily processes to improve how you interact with the world. Then there are the major learning curves. These may include work, school, and sports. When you take on a new task, job, or hobby you start down a learning curve.

Learning curves are often described as "difficult and steep" or "shallow and easy." Unfortunately, life is never a straight line, but rather a series of peaks and valleys. You may assume a task will be easy to learn, yet discover it is way more complex than you thought. Sometimes there are curves you don't expect.

There are many reasons for these irregularities. Some are due to external influences out of your control. However, some may be due to errors in judgement or lack of awareness to the amount of effort required. Generally, it becomes obvious in a short amount of time what the issue is and what needs to be done to solve the problem and continue to learn. But sometimes there may not be an obvious answer for issues that are being encountered.

What may be happening is what I term a "dip" in the learning curve. Often this dip is obvious and easy to spot. At other times it is just a plateau where improvement stops but there is not a noticeable reduction in the current level of performance. I experienced these dips and plateaus as I went through training as an air traffic controller. My supervisors and instructors didn't give any insight as to why I went through these periods of lessened performance. The feedback I received was that "it happens" and that I would probably push through.

A few years down the road, after I became a supervisor, I recognized this same period of dips and plateaus in the trainees I was responsible for and did not have any better answers for them. Then one day I was playing a new video game and recognized the same dip and plateau as I learned how the game worked. It was then I realized when you first start learning a game, starting a new job, or many other similar situations you only focus is survival. Be that keeping your character alive or separating airplanes your only focus is on the main goal. But then after a little while you start expanding your focus. You try to score more points or you try to maintain a more efficient traffic flow. By bringing in these new items your primary focus is distracted. This leads to more mistakes with the basics.

Additionally, you start trying out different techniques such as combining how two different controllers work a sequence to make it your own. As you develop and refine these new skills you will work through the dips and plateaus and complete the learning curve.

When you are in the role of instructor or supervisor be on the lookout for these dips or plateaus. Now that you know the reasons behind them, they should be easier to spot, almost predictable. Then you can share this insight with your trainees and other employees. With this information they should be able to move more quickly through the dip and become successful. Unfortunately there will always be a few that can't make the transition through the dip. But the knowledge of why it is happening may be the one thing needed to continue progressing.







# PWC CONFERENCE



# CARIBBEAN SYNERGY





# LEADING UNAPOLOGETICALLY IN A MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRY

By Karrie M. Krear,  
Outgoing PWC Great Lakes  
Regional Director

**T**hrough stubborn perseverance and a singular determination to become a pilot, Olga Nevarez did not let early defeats stop her from achieving her goal.

Born in Puerto Rico in 1954, she travelled the world as her father, a noncommissioned officer in the United States Army, transferred from base to base. She started school in Taiwan, and then moved to New Jersey, Iran, and Paraguay. When her father retired after 23 years of service, the family moved back to Puerto Rico.

Upon graduating from high school at the age of 16, Olga attended the University of Puerto Rico. There she tried to join the college's Reserve Officer Training Corps program, but was turned down because the program did not accept women. After college, her attempt to be accepted into the



United States Air Force Officer Training School also failed. Throughout all of this, Olga experienced discrimination, but she didn't know it at the time.

Olga worked in a number of different jobs after graduation. While employed in the accounting department of Puerto Rico International Airlines, she met Edwin Custodio. They married four months later. After the birth of her daughter, Maria, she accepted a job with the Department of Defense in Panama. The couple welcomed a son, Edwin in 1985. At the age of 26, and while working in Panama, she met with a recruiter and applied for the U.S. Air Force Officers Candidate School. According to Olga, when the recruiter asked her to list three jobs she wanted, she responded, "A pilot, a pilot, or a pilot."

The Air Force accepted her as a pilot candidate. In January 1980, Olga entered the Flight Screening Pilot Officer Training

School. Upon graduation, she attended Undergraduate Pilot Training at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas. The Air Force then assigned her as a pilot instructor at Laughlin AFB. There, Olga became the first female Northrop T-38 Talon (T-38) UPT flight instructor.

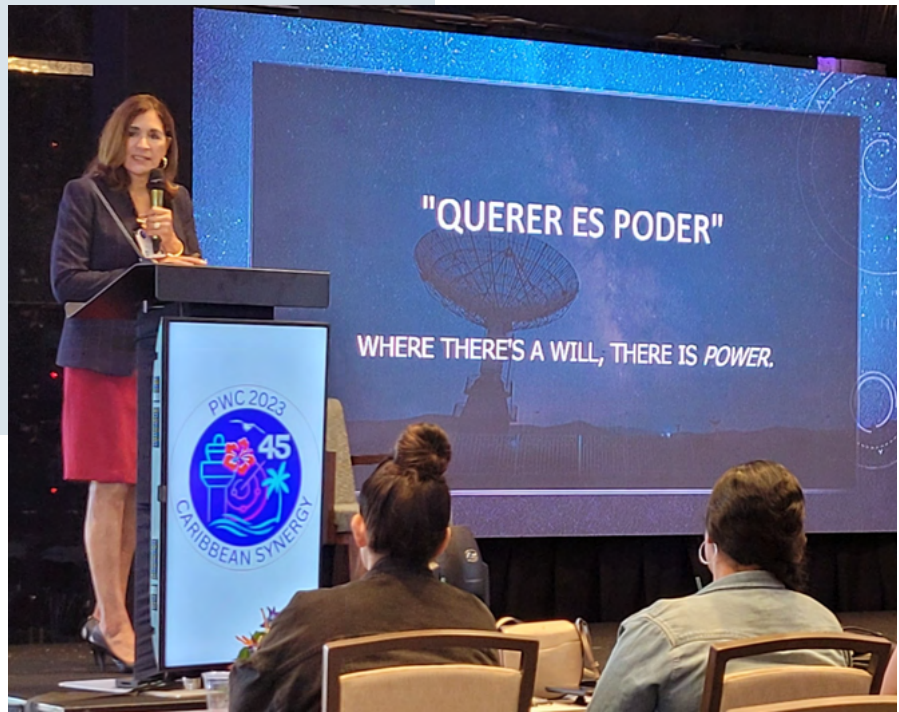
Olga said that her biggest challenge was self-doubt and everyone has self-doubt. Doubt and fear will limit your potential so surround yourself with support.





As Olga went through flight training, there were some people who tried to derail her training, but if you do things by the book, you will be supported and people have to support you. Olga was also told that she would not make it, but that statement became her personal challenge. Her defining moment was while she was a solo student in the T-38. During one of her flights, a bird struck the engine of her plane. A cool head and excellent piloting skills helped her recover from the emergency and safely land her plane.

Because of her actions, the Air Force awarded her the Headquarters Air Education and Training Command's Aviation Safety Award for superior airmanship. A subsequent assignment



757, and 767, and Fokker 100 aircraft. Her routes included the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Europe, Mexico, and Canada. Olga retired from American Airlines in February 2008.

By pioneering many firsts during her career, Olga has shattered stereotypes and served as a powerful role model for those aspiring to become a pilot. From breaking barriers and overcoming challenges as a woman in a male-dominated profession throughout her career, Olga has gained essential insights and perspectives that she shares with everyone, especially young women. What helped Olga lead in a male dominated industry was to follow the book, talk quietly, educate through action, stay relevant and accessible, advocate for yourself, and finally, know where people are coming from.

Olga downplays her aviation "firsts;" she humbly says, "Everything I did was for me and my family. I was not out to prove anything. I didn't even know I was the first anything. I only realized I was the first Latina military pilot when I had my first female student at pilot training. She was the first Latina to graduate from the U.S. Air Force Academy." Olga points to three principles that have helped her become successful in a profession dominated by men; overcoming self-doubt, staying open

to possibilities, and seeing herself as an equal.

Olga is currently an active member of the Hispanic Association of Aviation and Aerospace Professionals, Inc., a non-profit corporation that provides education, mentorship, and scholarship opportunities for Hispanics and underserved individuals striving for careers in the aerospace industry. She holds a leadership role in the Alamo City Chapter of the Women in Aviation International, a group that encourages the advancement of all girls and women in all aviation career fields and interests in San Antonio and surrounding cities. She owns a Cessna T210L and has also flown several general aviation aircraft like the Stearman biplane, Cessna-172, Beechcraft-35 V-tail, Cirrus Vision Jet, and a few others. Today, Olga is retired with over 11,000 flight hours to her name.

Olga concluded with her personal mantra which is "Querer es poder." translated as "Where there's a will there's a way."

where she subsequently became one of the first Latina airline Captains in the United States. She flew the Boeing 727,









# HOW AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COLLABORATION MAKES INTEGRATION WORK

BY JESSICA BYRUM, PWC SECRETARY

*Cadena* translated from Spanish to English means "chain." It also is an acronym for a group based on collaboration, CANSO ATFM Data Exchange Network for Americas (CADENA). During the 2023 Professional Women Controllers Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, attendees learned of how collaboration makes Air Traffic Management Integration work.

The choice of naming the group CADENA was intentional, as through aviation we are all connected on a global level. Presenter Duane Freer, Air Traffic Organization's (ATO) Space Operations Manager at the Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC), states "Collaboration, communication, getting people together, and talking through the common problems we have is so key as things get globalized."

Throughout the week, conference attendees learned the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and the presenters on CADENA echoed this sentiment. Presenter Madori Tanino, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Program Manager and lead of the CADENA initiative, noted "if you are inclusive, you are 50% more effective." CADENA is an amazing platform that allows greater airspace optimization and communication overall. The program allows financially challenged countries an opportunity to shine, as the platform makes resources available that would not be otherwise.

Hannah Browne, ATO Space Operations International Liaison, spoke to "the global reach of the FAA, and how we collaborate every single day with multiple international organizations." The FAA's borders touch 18 foreign Air Navigational Service Providers (ANSP) and 29 Flight Information Regions (FIR). Through CADENA, the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) is facilitating airspace optimization on a global scale. Being inclusive is key, as each country and organization is unique.

In the beginning, there were zero airlines participating with CADENA, but currently there are 26 airlines participating in this collaborative environment. The CADENA web conferences offer a vast amount of information for airlines and other partners. CADENA also has an online platform for participants to upload information, as well as obtain information from other participants. The information available from CADENA enables participants to learn and improve their operations. Airlines have been able to report on their savings through this initiative. This collaborative environment and information sharing has enticed other airlines to join. Madori stresses, "Everyone who wants to participate, is welcome to participate." She continues, "This is the only way to succeed."

CADENA enables all countries and entities the chance to have a seat at the table, regardless of their financial capabilities. Furthermore, many of the participating foreign groups did not understand traffic flow management. With CADENA, these countries were able to build a traffic flow unit, checklists, training, and more.

CADENA has also aided in the success of the implementation of space operations. In the past, the issuance of Notice to Air Missions (NOTAMS) was a challenge. Since the implementation of CADENA, international collaboration and coordination has been drastically improved; CADENA has ultimately broadened international relationships through improved communication. Madori wisely states, "If you have more information sharing, you can make a better decision."

The CADENA initiative has not been simplistic, but it has ultimately helped to get information into people's hands, improved collaboration, and created relationships. CADENA is a wonderful example how communication, collaboration, and inclusion can make all aspects of life better.







# SPECIAL OPERATIONS (AJR-25)



## A program overview presented by Greg Bean and Chad Whitman

BY THERESA PARKER, PWC  
NORTHWEST MOUNTAIN REGIONAL  
DIRECTOR

What do the Super Bowl, Masters Tournament, Boston Marathon, New Years Eve in New York City, 4th of July in Boston and the 9-11 anniversary all have in common? They are all major events that require extra planning for air traffic operations. Months before these events, the Special Operations Group (AJR-25) plan how to manage both airspace and ground operations in these very busy areas. This planning results in Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) and flow programs to keep aircraft moving

through or to avoid these high volume areas.

When a big event occurs or the President visits, AJR-25 develops the restricted areas and communicates with affected-facilities to achieve the planned outcome. The Special Operations Group-designee travels to the destination ahead of the event to meet with stakeholders (local law enforcement, airport operations and local air traffic) to decide the best way to move aircraft. They use their





expertise to optimize how the event will affect traffic patterns and ask questions like: Does the equipment that surrounds certain events affect radar equipment? What happens when we close a runway to the rest of the airspace system? Depending on the event the Group may be on a phone call or in person to answer questions, and ensure the flow of traffic during the event. They are responsible from start to finish.



Special Operations is also involved after major, meteorological disasters (ie hurricanes, tornadoes, etc). If a major disruption happens, AJR-25 will work with all stakeholders to get air traffic moving while taking into consideration emergency personnel and moving in supplies.

**The more you know...**

Have you ever wondered what was the biggest TFR? It just happened recently! The TFR was 150 miles by 150 miles, 12 miles off the East Coast involving a balloon. Before that the largest TFR was only 12 miles.

How can you be in Special Operations? It is a FAA 2152 position and you need to pass a top secret clearance/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) background investigation. The Group can be on call during special events and involves a lot of travel. How long are shifts? Eight to ten-hour shifts. Additionally, the core group of eight people can be on call. What about deployment? Before and after the event and on call as needed.

When a planned or unexpected event happens, Special Operations is there.



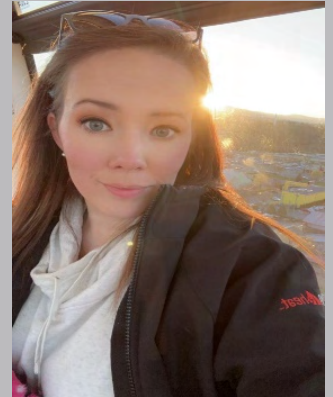


# 2023 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

## Carissa Benson

*Mary McBurney Memorial Scholarship - \$1500*

Carissa somewhat stumbled into a career in Air Traffic Control (ATC) when her Air Force Recruiter asked her if she wanted to take someone's place in basic training (due to an injury) and become a controller. It was not until she completed basic training and began classroom instruction in Biloxi, MS when she realized what she had gotten herself into. She studied day and night to learn all she could about our wonderful world of aviation. Carissa spent four years in South Carolina working fighter jets, one year in South Korea in a leadership role, then she ended her Air Force career working heavy-aircraft in Minot, ND. In 2016, she made her transition to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at Toledo ATCT where, due to fantastic mentorship and coaching, she became an Operational Supervisor. During her career with the FAA she used her GI Bill benefits to complete a bachelor's degree in Human Resources. Continuing her education would be her responsibility - which is a huge time and monetary commitment, especially to a single mom. Currently Carissa is enrolled in the University of Toledo Graduate School continuing her Human Resource studies. She is currently applying for positions outside of her current role with the goal of becoming an Air Traffic Manager. Especially as women, Carissa believes it is critically important that we become the type of role models that we needed when we were young in our careers. Because Carissa wants to be a great role model for not only for other women around her but her family, she plans to use this scholarship to be the best version of herself to set that example.



## Karen Combe

*PWC Family Scholarship - \$1500*

Karen is the wife of Professional Women Controllers Alumnus Member, Michael Combe. She worked as a probation officer for the adult and juvenile system in Texas for approximately 14 years. While working full-time as a probation officer, she attended college part-time eventually earning a bachelor's degree in Psychology. After receiving this degree, she was hired by the Montgomery County Juvenile Probation Department, beginning her career in helping others. Nearly 23 years after she graduated from Sam Houston University, she has returned to college to achieve a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to continue her path of helping others. Karen's short-term goals include balancing a full-time class schedule, keeping up her GPA and maintaining a full-time job. After completing her practicum and internship program hours, she was hired by the Jefferson Parish Diversion Program, but is only paid at a student rate until she graduates and gets her Provisional License for Professional Counselors (PLPC) certification.

Karen has done vast amounts of volunteer work and stays very involved in the communities that she has lived. She has provided assistance for those affected by Hurricane Ida through the Disaster Relief Program at the First Baptist Church of Slidell, packed backpacks for homeless individuals, prepared many meals for various church events and for people in need, and led Sunday school and children's Bible studies at one of the churches she has belonged to. The driving force behind Karen's desire to help others stems from her own personal experience as a teenager. She never wants to lose sight of what she went through and what individuals may be going through. As she likes to say, "Be careful and kind, you don't know their story."



# Casandra Hurd

*Sue Townsend  
Scholarship - \$1500*



Casandra is an Air Traffic Control Specialist (ATCS) at Albuquerque ATCT/TRACON (ABQ). She is a very active NATCA member including being the Local Safety Council Lead at her facility. She has a bachelor's degree in Aeronautics from the University of North Dakota and has her Private Pilot's License (PPL). This past year Casandra realized she was settling and was destined to do more, so she began exploring different parts of the aviation industry. Casandra began a certificate program in Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) at Central New Mexico Community College where she earned her Remote Pilot, sUAS (Part 107) license and graduated in April 2023. She also began a graduate degree program in UAS at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide earlier this year. Her initial career goal was to transfer to the Air Traffic Control System Command Center in a role with the Central Altitude Reservation Function. Now Casandra's focus has shifted to help maintain operational integrity throughout the National Airspace System while accommodating various applications of UAS and Space Operations. The overall intention is to transition to a role in airspace design that safely integrates Advanced and Urban Air Mobility and/or Space Operations. She is doing her best to find a balance between her ambitious dreams and goals, work, school, and her children.

# Tonian Tomlinson

*Jaqueline Smith  
Burdette Career in  
Aviation - \$1500*

Tonian has earned a Commercial Flight AS Degree from Mount San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) and is currently enrolled in Southern Illinois University's Aviation Management Bachelor's off-campus program. In addition to her school work, Tonian is also a member of Mt SAC's Flight Training Association where she has approximately 100 flight hours and is preparing for her Private Pilot-check ride. In the short term, her goal is to continue her flight training by pursuing her Instrument Rating and Commercial Pilot Certificate, while her long-term goal is to become a pilot for a major airline. If she isn't in the cockpit or on studying on campus, Tonian can be found at Mt. SAC's flight school behind the dispatcher desk where she holds the position of Lead Dispatcher. Her responsibilities include prioritizing students' safety and ensuring that the flight school and it's aircraft are running smoothly. Being a part of these institutions has allowed her to be an active member of organizations such as Women in Aviation and the San Gabriel Valley Ninety-Nines, where she volunteers at air shows, conferences, and other outreach events. Tonian also volunteers her time at the House of Ruth, a domestic violence shelter providing food items and other necessities to those undergoing hard times, and the No Drugs America Association to advocate against the use of drugs within the youth community. As an immigrant and first-generation college student, pursuing higher education is of the utmost importance to Tonian. This scholarship will help her to focus on her academics and goals without financial stress.









# DR. JEAN KANOKOGI - FINDING YOUR IKIGAI

By Sandy Holcomb, PWC Western Pacific Regional Director

**It's 2:45pm on a beautiful Caribbean afternoon and up on the stage is Dr. Jean Kanokogi yelling "Gambatte!"**

We were introduced to Dr. Jean Kanokogi, who is of samurai ancestry, at our April 2022 PWC Charlotte, N.C. Conference. For us in Professional Women Controllers (PWC) we affectionally call her Dr. Jean; like the dear family member, valued speaker, author, Judo champion that is our friend.

She had recently completed the fascinating memoir of her mother, Rusty Kanokogi, also known as "the Mother of Womens Judo". The memoir, titled "Get Up & Fight," is the in-depth version of the talk she gave us at the PWC Conference in 2022.

It is now 2023 on the San Juan Caribe Hilton stage, and Dr. Jean is still yelling 'Gambatee!' to our new PWC audience. Some remember her from the previous year, and some never heard of

her or know why hearing what she has to share is so valuable. I feel that to truly understand Dr. Jean, you must know a bit about her seventh-degree, Judo black belt Mother.

The story of Rena "Rusty" Kanokogi (née Glickman) is captured in the highly recommended book "Get Up & Fight." Dr. Jean's book expands on the detailed and exciting life of of her mother- "Rusty," who rose from an untraditional, tough, Jewish-upbringing in Brooklyn New York, to the most important thing to ever happen in Women's Judo. Her mother's story and family's amazing adventures are inspiring, sometimes heartbreaking, but always uplifting.

"In 1959, disguised as a man, she won a medal at a YMCA judo tournament, but had to return it after acknowledging that she was a woman." She didn't let this stop her ambition. Her relentless love, talent, desire to excel and passion for Judo paved the way for women in this male-dominated sport. It took years and many sacrifices, but in 1992, at age 57,

Rusty Kanokogi's efforts paid off; at the XXV Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, Women's Judo was finally included in the world games! She never took no for an answer and decided early on to "be the hammer," not the nail.

Her father, an esteemed sensei, is still famous in his own right. Most visibly, he was in the 1979 Samsonite commercial, teaching the famed luggage about some serious Judo black belt moves. Growing up in such a unique, intense and diverse environment, it's no surprise that Dr. Jean is equally impressive.



Rusty in beautiful form!



Back to the stage; today Dr. Jean is presenting ways for us to learn to do our best and find our purpose for existence.

In Japanese, the phrase *Ganbatte Kudasai* ("do your best please") is often used to encourage people to always do their best in everything they do.

As Dr. Jean shares on her website, she calls on her Japanese culture, encouraging her listeners to look inward and work on being the best version of themselves. She implores each person, through self-reflection, to find the authentic version of who they are and how they can be the best version of themselves, which results in a happier and self-actualized life.

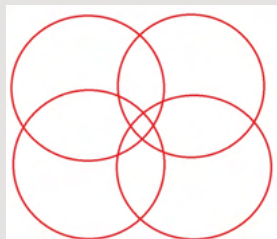
**Ganbatte:** Japanese word for 'Do your best' (GaM-bat-tay).

One of the ways we can do our best is to seek out our *ikigai*.

**Ikigai:** Japanese word for 'reason for being' or 'your life purpose'; also makes you smile to say (Eee-key-guy); it really does, try it!

So how do we find our life's purpose? What is your *ikigai*? Dr. Jean shares that if you intersect 4 things, you'll start to find a path to your *ikigai*.

1. What are you good at?
2. What can you get paid for?
3. What do you love?
4. What does the world need right now?



If you were to fill in the 4 circles shown above with your answers, you may just find in the intersecting center space, the way to your *ikigai*.



Far Right and Middle Bottom: COPS ACT - Confidential Opportunities for Peer Support Act signed into law on November 18, 2021  
 Left Bottom and Top Middle: Rena "Rusty" and Ryohei Kanokogi  
 Top Left: Dr. Jean Kanokogi and PWC Western Pacific Regional Director Sandy Holcomb. San Juan Puerto Rico 2023 PWC Conference

Once you start to be mindful of your own self-awareness; talk to yourself like you would someone you love, and don't allow another person's expectations to infiltrate your thoughts. You are on the path to being your best self and true to your *ikigai*. Dr. Jean reminds us to take things day by day: make priorities and tackle them as **best you** can and not according to someone else's expectation.

Growing up, Dr. Jean studied Judo with her family, was on the US Judo team and is a 5th degree Judo black belt. She later went to college and was drawn towards work in law enforcement. She was ultimately selected as a Senior Special Agent for the U.S. Government and voluntary Director of Mental Health for the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA). It was in this career and as a first responder/lead investigator of the terroristic acts of 9/11 that she used her Doctorate degree in Psychology. Dr. Jean understood firsthand the devastating effects of post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) and was noticing a spike in law enforcement suicides.

She has been fortunate to find her life's work, helping to eliminate the stigma of asking for help in mental healthcare in

jobs that typically frown upon such openness. Dr. Jean has and continues to work with several members of Congress and their staff to pass bipartisan bills supporting mental health and wellness of Federal Law enforcement and other first responders. Most recently, she helped pass the COPS ACT - Confidential Opportunities for Peer Support Act, which was signed into law on November 18, 2021.

"Through her diverse life experiences, Dr. Jean has found and embraces her *Ikigai*. As one of her many admirers, I share that "she shines brightest as an inspirational speaker motivating others to find their own Get Up & Fight."

I recommend taking a few minutes to listen and see Dr. Jean in action: visit her website [www.rustykanokogi.com](http://www.rustykanokogi.com). On the site she generously shares videos from some of her inspiring talks, including links and photos about her latest news and speaking topics.



Left: Rusty's 1980 Gold Medal  
 Right: Dr. Jean's 2020 empowering Challenge coin

"Jean Kanokogi, Ph.D. is a Special Agent for the U.S. government with extensive experience in conducting criminal investigations. A 5th degree black belt in judo and a highly respected sensei, she was on the U.S. National Judo Team and won several medals in international tournaments. Most notably, Jean was one of the original signers of the American Civil Liberty Union suit to fight for women's rights in the sport of judo." 2









# SPACE: THE NEXT FRONTIER!

By Veneca Coulanges, PWC Southern Regional Director

Are you ready to check-in to your hotel room in space? Well, get ready, because the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is preparing the logistics and regulations to make this possible. James Hatt, of the Space Policy Division, and Duanne Freer, Space Operations Manager, gave the attendees of the Professional Women Controllers (PWC) Conference in Puerto Rico a glimpse of what is in the works for space innovations.

The United States has reinvigorated its space travel and industry sectors with groundbreaking technologies, and is developing national and international policies to support their implementation. The emergence of commercial space companies like Space-X, Virgin Galactic, and Blue Origin has further revolutionized the space industry. In addition to government-funded missions, private enterprises are actively working towards making efficient, reusable rockets. These rockets will be capable of reaching Mars, launching smaller satellite constellations that offer better coverage, and expanding space tourism, which includes

plans for outer space hotels.

This new era of commercial space endeavors brings with it a host of job opportunities, not only in the private sector but also within the FAA. Hatt and Freer showed the conference attendees the new positions being created across the country to support the space sector, centered around the command center in Virginia and space ports in states like Florida, Texas and California. Work is also being done to convert positions responsible for overseeing rocket launches to 2152 positions within the Agency.

At the 45th PWC Conference Hatt and Freer took a deep dive into what the FAA is currently doing with Space technology and integration, and gave a glimpse of what is to come. Keep an eye out for the career opportunities and many advancements that will enhance the lives of people across the world.



# BREAKING BARRIERS FOR WOMEN IN AVIATION: FLIGHT PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

## *Women in Aviation Advisory Board Speaker: Trish Gilbert*

**By Tawni Pettigrove, PWC  
Membership Director**

It was a real honor to hear Trish Gilbert speak about the Women in Aviation Advisory Boards (WIAAB) recommendations made to Congress, the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and aviation industry. Trish was one of 30 women-experts that were tasked to develop and provide independent recommendations and strategies for the FAA to explore opportunities to encourage female students and aviators to pursue a career in aviation.

Trish shared that her time and work on the board was an invaluable and life changing experience. She described the WIAAB as a group of 30 passionate women that were serious to see some change. They worked tirelessly to come up with a flight plan for the future on how to attract, retain, and advance women's careers in aviation. They did extensive research and data compilation to isolate what the challenges and barriers are that women face in the aviation industry today.

The data revealed that women make up less than 20% of the aviation industry workforce. This begs the question: Why for over the last 60 years has the number of women in the aviation field remained stagnant? Also, what are the barriers holding the numbers back? Once the board could clearly identify the challenges that women face in the Aviation industry, they could then create

recommendations on how to eliminate or make progress to overcome these barriers. This information was compiled into a comprehensive and thorough report that can be utilized across the industry to ensure that we start to move the needle on integrating, retaining, and advancing women in aviation careers.

The Women in Aviation Advisory Board Vision Statement: The Women in Aviation Advisory Board seeks to leave future generations an industry that has attracted and retained the best possible talent. The result will be an industry on the leading edge of safety, innovation, and profitability. Purposeful attention to workplace culture, recruitment, retention, and advancement of women will improve access to all those seeking opportunity for satisfying careers.

Trish's presentation should inspire us to keep the momentum going and put these recommendations into action. It has been over a year since the WIAAB submitted their 70 page report on breaking barriers for women in aviation to Congress, the DOT, the FAA, and aviation industry. It is important for everyone to take action with this knowledge and implement real change now!

What can you do? First read the report that the WIAAB released. The information available in this report reveals many areas that we can individually start working on to make a big difference. The number

one barrier found for women in aviation is culture in the industry. We each can individually do our part to work on breaking down this barrier by talking about it. Educate yourself and others about the importance of a culture that includes and welcomes women. This is a call to action for each of us to strive to be a part of the solution! Get active in making a difference! This is just one of the areas identified in the report. Now go grab the whole report and start reading to see what other areas that you can put into action and make a change!

Lastly, show support to create and establish a permanent Women In Aviation Advisory Board to ensure that the important work that was started with these recommendations continue. The work is not done. This is just the beginning. The goal is still the same to improve the Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Women, which will result in a more diverse and successful workforce.











## Peer-to-Peer Engagement in Puerto Rico

**By Tim Arel, Chief Operating Officer, Air Traffic Organization (ATO)**

I was pleased to participate in the 2023 Professional Women Controllers (PWC) training conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

I gave opening remarks, served as a panelist in a speed mentoring session and did a fireside chat with PWC President Jenn Dempster. We talked about our current challenges, ATO priorities and career opportunities that were highlighted throughout this PWC event. Many of the solutions to our current challenges, including staffing and training, reside within our workforce and I highlighted the need to prioritize our training efforts.

And when I think about succession planning, diversity of experience often makes candidates much more competitive. It gives them a broader perspective of the national airspace system. The organization benefits from operational personnel contributing to support efforts and support personnel better understanding operations.

At the conference, we discussed the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. We have to do a better job of educating and recruiting to diversify our workforce, especially among controllers, technicians, pilots and mechanics. And once we hire people, we must give them the support and opportunities they need to succeed.

I appreciated the opportunity to interact with colleagues and students in Puerto Rico, through PWC and two events for education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, which we know as STEM. I enjoy these engagements because I believe that the key to achieving diversity is by showing students the opportunities aviation can provide. It is not just for pilots, engineers, and technicians. There is a place for everyone in aviation and at the FAA.

I am impressed by PWC's innovative approach to peer-to-peer engagement. By incorporating speed mentoring into the conference agenda, they provide attendees with a unique opportunity to engage with agency executives and senior management.

I want to congratulate Jenn and the entire PWC planning and leadership team for hosting such an interesting and meaningful engagement this week, for taking time out of their weekend to host over 200 young people at one of the best STEM events I've ever attended at Luis Munoz Marin International Airport. We had controllers, program managers, communication specialists, engineers, and interns taking time to engage with the next generation workforce.

Thank everyone who made my visit to Puerto Rico such a success.



# Accident & Incident Investigations

By Wendy Stevens, PWC Eastern Regional Director



On the third and final day of the Professional Women Controllers Conference, Alex Nelson from Safety Intelligence and Response Group (AJI-13) and Matt Cabak from Accident Investigations (AVP-100) joined us for a joint seminar to shed some light on what happens post-accident in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Alex and Matt also shared valuable information on some of the agency's recent events and their roles in reviewing that data for them.



The purpose of investigations for the FAA is to conduct a review of each significant or noteworthy event occurring in the National Airspace System (NAS). Alex and his team must identify safety issues, establish the facts, conditions, and circumstances surrounding the event, and establish meaningful recommendations to prevent, mitigate, or reduce the possibility of recurrence. Matt stressed successful risk management depends on the prompt and timely collection and upward reporting of accurate information, which is essential for all of us to remember at every position and level within the agency.



Above: N97CX, Mid-Air Collision in North Las Vegas, NV  
Right: Matt Cabek, Accident Investigations Division, AVP-100





### AVP-100 Roles and Responsibilities:

Keep all FAA Senior Executives aware of significant events related to the FAA Nine Areas of Responsibility • Review all reports of domestic accidents/incidents • Review worldwide significant accidents/incidents with US interests • Investigate and communicate significant events • Collaborate with National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) & Conduct parallel FAA investigations • Recommend and facilitate corrective actions.

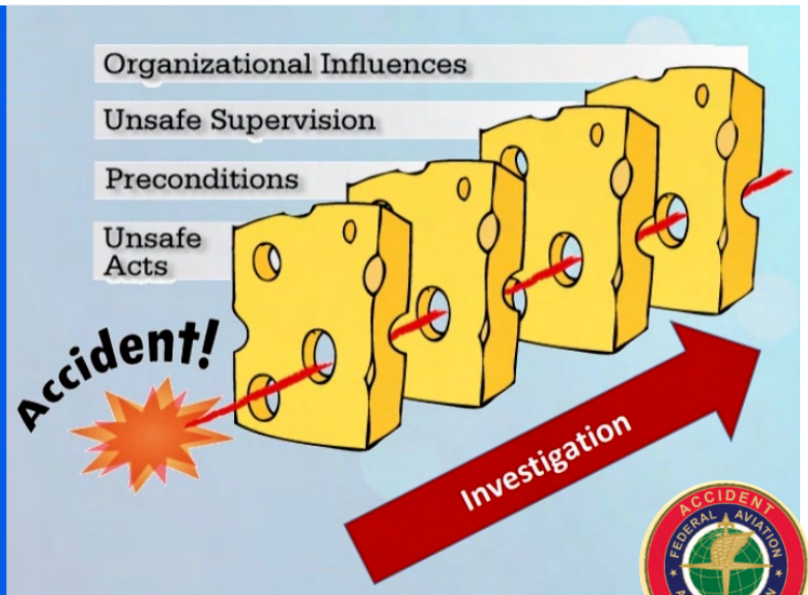


Above: Alex Nelson, Safety Intelligence and Response Group (AJI-13)

### AJI-13 Roles and Responsibilities:

Keep all FAA Senior Executives aware of significant events taking place in the NAS at all times • Review all Significant Mandatory Occurrence Reports submitted by facilities and monitor events in the NAS • Provide support to the Joint Air Traffic Operations Command (JATOC) • Investigate and communicate significant events • Facilitate NTSB data requests • Collaborate with NTSB Air Traffic Control Workgroups and conduct parallel FAA investigations.

***“There are times when safety critical information can be overlooked or missed. Complacency comes with ease, so make sure you're not a hole in the cheese!”***



Right: James Reason- Swiss Cheese Model







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# Lowdown on LOUISVILLE EST. 1778

Why are you going to see the fleur de lis everywhere?

Louisville was founded in 1778 by George Rogers. It is named after King Louis XVI of the House of Bourbon in appreciation of France's assistance in the Revolutionary War. Therefore, his family's symbol, the fleur de lis was long ago adopted by Louisville as the city's emblem.

Churchill Downs was founded by the grandson of famous explorer William Clark. Meriwether Lewis Clark, Jr. founded the racetrack in 1874, and originally called it the Louisville Jockey Club. The 150th running of the Kentucky Derby will be May 4, 2024.

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