

WOMEN IN THE COCKPIT

ON ONE OF MY LAST TRIPS FOR THE AIRLINE, I checked the manifest. The passenger count was correct, the total weight added up correct, the lights indicated all the doors were secured, and we were cleared to spool the engines. After startup we received the all clear from ground personnel to depart the gate. I opened the clam shells to reverse the direction of the thrust and slowly backed the Boeing until clear of the jetway. After completing the before taxi checklist the first officer requested clearance to taxi.

A female voice cleared us to the active runway. The before takeoff checklists were completed and we were ready to smoke the wild blue yonder. The copilot changed over to the tower frequency and requested clearance for takeoff. A female voice cleared us for takeoff, and to contact departure control after we were off the ground. The copilot made the comment, "What is this world coming to?"

Someone answered, "You haven't heard the last of it yet." Changing over to departure control, the copilot reported in. Another female; this one said she had us on radar, and she monitored our flight until we were requested to call the en route traffic controllers. Before switching frequencies the copilot remarked, "Were they all really female controllers? Maybe they're male controllers who had their seat belts fastened too tight?"

More women are making a career in aviation than ever, and they are doing an excellent job. Frontier Airlines hired the first female pilot (Emily Howell Warner) in the United States to fly for a regularly scheduled airline. Although it was never my privilege to fly the line with her, she did fly copilot for me on a simulator check, and she did an exceptional job. I heard that before coming on the line in 1973 she had served as a flight instructor and had even instructed several of our copilots.

The following information was taken from an article in Arizona Flyways by former Frontier Captain Billy Walker.

Between 1973 and 1986 Emily would fly as first officer and captain on the DHC-6, Convair 580 and the Boeing 737. She also became the first female captain; and in 1986, Emily would command the first all-female flight crew for a scheduled airline in the United States. Captain Warner has been honored nationally and internationally. She has logged 21,000 total flight hours, and 14,000 of that as an airline pilot. Now as an FAA aviation safety inspector, she is an air crew program manager and is assigned to the United Airlines Boeing 737 fleet.

As Captain Billy Walker is quoted in his article for Arizona Flyways, 'America's First Female Airline Pilot.' "Atta Boy, Girl!"

*EXCERPTED FROM "THE GOLDEN YEARS OF FLYING"
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