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# WAI Connect

The Official eNewsletter of  
Women in Aviation International



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*WAI Board of Directors and staff welcome Lynda Coffman as the new WAI CEO*

**February 2024**

### **Lynda Coffman Joins WAI as New CEO**

WAI's new CEO, Lynda Coffman, started her role on January 22, 2024, and looks forward to meeting members during WAI2024 and at industry events. She will lead the future business development and

strategic direction of over 18,000-member strong nonprofit organization while partnering with the board of directors and overseeing staff and daily operations.

Most recently, Lynda served as vice president of United Airlines and president of United Ground Express, a wholly owned airport operating subsidiary of United Airlines. She will draw on her over 30 years of successful leadership positions at United in various roles that highlight her passion for financial management, operational oversight, strategic planning, and talent retention. Lynda has served on multiple private company and nonprofit boards and has received several awards for her influential contributions. A strong communicator dedicated to inspiring youth in aviation and aerospace, Lynda has also held numerous leadership and sponsorship roles supporting initiatives to champion diversity. She has a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering from Santa Clara University and a Master of Management from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University. Lynda resides in Barrington, Illinois, with her husband, and they have a daughter.

“I look forward to bringing my experience and passion to continue to strengthen and grow WAI around the world while broadening support for its mission,” Lynda Coffman, WAI CEO said. “Leading this organization is my dream job, and my first week was amazing! I look forward to working together to connect with members and supporters, and to continue the work bringing our strategic vision and contributions to this industry.”

[Read the press release here.](#)

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## Congratulations to WAI2024 Scholarship Recipients!

More than 130 deserving WAI members will be receiving over \$1 million in scholarship awards during WAI2024. This year's scholarships offer many opportunities in aerospace engineering, aviation maintenance, aviation manufacturing skills, dispatch, flight training, and general career enhancement.

Kudos to all the winners listed [here](#) and who will be celebrated at WAI2024.



*One of the major benefits of being a WAI member is the opportunity to apply for scholarships every year!*



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## New at WAI2024!

During the Friday morning General Session, outgoing Board Chair **Captain Deborah Hecker** will introduce new CEO **Lynda Coffman** and announce the results of the board elections.

Two board members' terms will expire at WAI2024 including **Captain Deborah Hecker**, and Board

Member **Marci Veronie**. Treasurer **Linda Markham** and Secretary **Michaela Lucas** will continue their current terms through 2025. **Rhonda Larance**, who had served as Vice Chair, will move onto a regular board seat, while **Shannon Weidekamp** will step up into the Vice Chair position. Together, they will make up WAI's executive committee. One new board member, **Bart Roberts**, is on the ballot for election. Current board member, **Kathy Yodice** will be appointed Chair.

This year's voting will be held through an electronic ballot emailed to all active members. Please cast your vote online at <https://bit.ly/WAI2024BoardElectionBallot>. Note that voting closes at midnight EST on March 8, 2024.

All current board member bios are available at [www.WAI.org/board-of-directors](http://www.WAI.org/board-of-directors).

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## WAI2024 Early Registration Ends February 13

Making your plans to attend the 35th Annual Women in Aviation Conference March 21-23 in Orlando?

[Save and register early](#) this month by midnight EST February 13 for our annual three-day gathering. More than 100 companies have already registered to exhibit. Learn more about all the exhibiting options and pricing [here](#).



*The annual WAI Conference is a unique gathering. Register today to join 4,500 members and friends.*

**Please note the the Orlando World Center Marriott is a cash free facility.**

**Use your registration confirmation email to access the Attendee Service Center and register for additional professional development seminars and workshops, tours, and volunteer opportunities.**

**Register to Attend WAI2024**

**Register to Exhibit at WAI2024**

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## Register for Girls in Aviation Day Orlando During WAI2024

On Saturday, March 23, during the annual WAI conference, girls ages 8-18 and their parents and chaperones are invited to participate in this educational and fun event at the Orlando World Center Marriott. The event will feature over 25 activity stations, inspiring female role models, a college fair, a scavenger hunt in the Exhibit Hall, and more!

Tickets must be purchased in advance and includes lunch for \$10 per child/adult.

Visit [www.WAI.org/2024-girls-in-aviation-day-orlando](http://www.WAI.org/2024-girls-in-aviation-day-orlando) for all the details and online registration.



**Girls IN AVIATION DAY ORLANDO**  
A Women in Aviation International® Event  
Saturday, March 23, 2024  
Orlando World Center Marriott  
Resort and Convention Center  
Orlando, Florida  
8 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Girls 8-18 • Fun-Filled  
Earn an Aviation Fun Patch  
Lunch • College Fair  
Visit the Exhibit Hall**

REGISTER TODAY!

Fly a Drone →

Go on a navigational chart scavenger hunt →

Use tools to make a wire bracket →

Learn how to marshall an aircraft ←

WAI AVIATION Girl

Aviation Fun Patch ←

Build your own airplane ↓

Lots more hands-on activities ↓

Fly a flight simulator →

Featured luncheon speaker, Nicole Barrios is the CEO/Owner and founder of Rainbow Helicopters in Hawaii, that offers helicopter tours, private charters, and aerial photography.

\$10/Child includes lunch  
Parents & chaperones welcome at lunch for \$10  
**Chaperones required • Space is limited!**  
Register online at:  
[www.wai.org/2024-girls-in-aviation-day-orlando](http://www.wai.org/2024-girls-in-aviation-day-orlando)

*Inspire future female aviation/aerospace leaders in the Orlando area by sharing information about Girls in Aviation Day during WAI2024.*



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**WAI MENTOR CONNECT**

**Mentor Exchange:  
Unleashing Wisdom Together**

20 February 2024 | 11:00 a.m. (US) ET

[Register for this month's WAI Mentor Connect webinar](#)

We know that having a mentor to guide you through your career in aviation is critical to retaining women working in our field. We also know that being a mentor is one of the most rewarding ways you can give back to your community.

Are you a member of WAI Mentor Connect or do you want to find out more about this exclusive program for WAI Members? Join the team at Guider, WAI staff, mentors, and mentees to learn about all the resources and tools available during the second of three special hour-long webinars beginning on February 20 from 11-noon (US) ET. [Register here for free.](#)

Join almost 600 other WAI members today who are putting their WAI membership to work by being a part of WAI Mentor Connect - [register for Mentor Connect here.](#)



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## Chapter News

Officers and leaders from all WAI chapters are welcome to participate in our monthly webinar to give you the best resources to help Women in Aviation International chapters grow and succeed. Watch the Chapter Leader Facebook page, the WAI Connect newsletter, and the [WAI Chapter Resources page](#) for registration links monthly.

**Please register for this month's Chapter Leadership Connect webinar!**  
**February 16, 2024 - (1-2 p.m. EST)**

**Topic: 35th Annual Women in Aviation International Conference Attendee Planning**

[Register here.](#)

Note: You must be a current WAI member to attend.

Thinking about starting a WAI Chapter? Have questions about WAI Chapters? [Email Jessi Rowden](#), WAI chapter relations manager!



*Learn about opportunities to showcase your chapter, nominate your Volunteer of the Year, and find out best practices for Conference attendance in this interactive webinar Join this month's Chapter Leadership Connect on February 16, 2024, at 1 p.m. EST. Register to attend [here.](#)*

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## Member Benefits

[WAI members](#) seek to inspire and stand for encouragement, continued education, and a whole lot of fun! When you join Was, you'll have access to exclusive discount programs and benefits, including many diverse benefits,

## Exclusive Discount Programs for Members

- **Avemco:** 5% discount on insurance
- **Aviation Medicine Advisory Service:** 5% discount on standard case fees
- **Enterprise and National Rental-A-Car:** special discount rates with promotion code
- **General Aviation News subscription:** free sample issues and 50% off subscription
- **King Schools:** free package of 5 King courses focused on Risk Management and 20% discount on all King Schools courses
- **MedJetAssist:** reduced annual and multi-year rates
- **SmithAmundsen:** free 30-minute consultation on legal services
- **Travelpro®:** exclusive 20% discount on all products

RESERVE YOUR LIMITED EDITION WAI2024 CONFERENCE T-SHIRT.

# Shop for WAI2024 Gear

**Unisex Seafoam or Coral Silk T-shirt**  
Unisex sizes (S-3XL)  
100% preshrunk cotton  
Imprinted distressed front design  
**\$25**

**Ladies Heather Charcoal V-neck T-shirt**  
Next Level, Sizes (S-3XL)  
**\$25**

**Unisex Navy Blue Long-Sleeve T-shirt**  
Unisex sizes (XS-3XL)  
100% ring-spun cotton  
Imprinted distressed front logo  
Imprinted left-sleeve logo  
**\$30**

**Unisex Charcoal Sponge Fleece Crew**  
Bella Canvas sizes (XS-2XL)  
**\$40**

**Ordering:**  
Pre-Orders will begin: Jan 2, 2024 | Pre-Order deadline: Feb. 21, 2024  
After this date, conference merchandise can be purchased at the WAI Store during show hours  
Pick-Up pre-orders at WAI Store: March 21-23, 2024 during show hours

**Women in Aviation INTERNATIONAL**  
[www.WAI-store.org](http://www.WAI-store.org)

*"Anything's possible if you've got enough nerve."*

*- J.K. Rowling*

Pioneer Hall of Fame

Education & Careers

Scholarships



## Past Issues

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[\[https://www.wai.org/member-compass#profile\]](https://www.wai.org/member-compass#profile)

If you wish to unsubscribe [jkandula@wai.org](mailto:jkandula@wai.org) from future WAI Connect eNewsletter mailings, go to: [\[Unsubscribe Now\]](#).

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