

Mary Frances Umfress (Phillips) T-39

15 July 1922 - 6 December 2008

(aged 86)



NEW FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

Her School Dream Comes True - - - Instructor Rating.

Back in 1939, while a Tech High Senior, Miss Mary Frances Umfress was “bitten by the flying bug.” She called all the flying schools to find out their rates, starting counting her pennies and made a notation in her diary --- “I can have my commercial pilots license and instruction’s rating in 1945.”

Her high school dream became a reality Tuesday when Inspector K. W. Lindermann, stepping out of her plane after the test flight at Bowen Field, West Memphis, congratulated Miss Umfress on an excellent job of flying and issued her flight instructor’s rating.

Miss Umfress started flying three years ago, accumulating her flight time and experience the ‘hard way.’ Her log book has hundreds of entries of 10-, 15-, and 20-minute flights.

She took a job as secretary at Bowen Flying Service so she could be near flying activity and get in the maximum flying time for herself. Instructors at the West Memphis airport nicknamed her “Worry Wart” because she continually pestered them to take her for a ride.

Much of the credit for her success in flying she gives to Bill Faison, veteran West Memphis instructor. All her flight training came under his tutelage.

Although flying is her “first love” Miss Umfress is also an accomplished musician. She won first prize at a statewide piano contest held in Nashville three consecutive years.

Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Umfress, 761 Moon, gave her a Gruem wrist watch – the kind used by Pan American Airways pilots – to commemorate her flying accomplishment.

Among the planes Mary Frances has flown are Waco UEC, Stinson 8RS, Navy N3N, PT-17, Pt-19, Luscombe and Cub. She received her private license in June 1943.

Miss Umfress will give student instructions at Bowen Flying Service in addition to continuing on the job as secretary.

Information from The Press-Scimitar, Friday, November 2, 1945.

