

Scholarship announced in memory of Savanna May Royes

The family of Savanna May Royes, a 20-year-old Aurora resident who lost her life last year while training for her private pilot's license, has established a memorial scholarship in her honour.

Tim and Loraine Royes have come together with the Urban Pilots Network (UPN) to establish the Savanna May Royes Flight Safety Scholarship.

Set to launch later this year, the annual scholarship will support young women of colour within the UPN with expenses related to their training, including costs to attend safety conferences, empowering them to grow, learn, and pursue their aviation dreams safely.

Savanna's passing deeply affected the Aurora community and surrounding areas with more than 800 people having attended her celebration of life, said the Royes family in a statement. A common theme among the speakers in attendance, including six of her Northern Lights Public School teachers, was Savanna's kindness, thoughtfulness, generosity, and the bright spirit she brought to everyone around her.

A GoFundMe page was established by the family shortly after Savanna lost her life in the July 8, 2025 midair accident in Steinbach, MB, with the expressed purpose of funding a scholarship in their daughter's name.

After a month of searching for the right home for her scholarship, we knew it belonged with UPN, whose mission reflects everything Savanna believed in, said Tim in a statement. Thanks to the generosity of so many people, more than \$42,000 was raised.

UPN's mission, says the family, is to uplift minority youths by reaching directly into communities and schools, encouraging young people to pursue careers in aviation. The group also collaborates with Black ESTEEM in running The Black Girl Boss Academy, an aviation-themed summer program that empowers young Black girls by helping them gain the skills and confidence to imagine themselves in fields where they are still under-represented.

We are deeply honoured to join the Royes family in establishing this significant scholarship, said UPN Vice President Coneil Campbell. It is with profound respect that we support this initiative, which so closely reflects our organization's enduring commitment to advancing inclusion within the aviation industry.

Amid their time of loss, the Royes family has chosen to transform their grief into a meaningful act of service, one that will create new opportunities for women like Savanna and inspire lasting change.

By Brock Weir
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