

**EULA ‘PEARL’  
CARTER  
SCOTT  
1915-2005**



**YOUNGEST  
PILOT  
IN  
AMERICA**

Small in stature but enormous in drive, Pearl Scott was a giant in Oklahoma aviation history. Taught by pioneer aviator Wiley Post, she took her first solo flight at age thirteen, becoming the youngest pilot in the United States. This would be the start of an amazing life.

Eula ‘Pearl’ Carter was born in December 1915 in Marlow. Her mother Lucy was Chickasaw and her white father George, blind since his teen years, became wealthy buying and renting over 600 farms. Pearl became his “eyes”, traveling when he collected rent or worked in his downtown office. A cousin taught her how to drive at age eleven, so her father bought her a 1927 Durant Roadster convertible to drive him to work and herself to school at age twelve. Pearl later played the violin in the high school orchestra.

Wiley Post frequently visited the Carters because his brother lived nearby. In 1928, Post landed his plane on their property and asked George to be his first passenger after getting his license to fly solo. George and Pearl both took their first plane rides that day. While in the air, Pearl asked Wiley hundreds of questions, and later on the ground, she told her father she wanted to learn how to fly. Wiley agreed to teach her.

Every time Post came to town, he would take Pearl flying and teach her more about the airplane. Soon, it became apparent she was a natural with no fear. Wiley became a mentor to Pearl and convinced George to buy her a plane. After several months of lessons, Pearl was surprised with her own Curtis Robbins monoplane that George had bought for \$4,500. He also built an airstrip and hangar for her plane on their farm.

On September 12, 1929, thirteen-year-old Pearl took her first solo flight, making aviation history. Pearl was too young to obtain a student’s pilot permit so she listed her age as sixteen to qualify. By fourteen, she became a crowd favorite in southern Oklahoma and north Texas at barnstorming events and air circuses. In 1931, Wiley allowed Pearl to fly his “Winnie Mae”, even though he didn’t trust others with his airplane.

Against her parents’ wishes, Pearl eloped at age sixteen with local farmer William Lewis ‘Scotty’ Scott on February 5, 1931. She gave up flying after her second child was born, afraid a tragedy would devastate them. While living in Duncan, Wiley surprised Pearl by introducing her to Will Rogers, who put his arm around her and said, “Wiley, this must be the little lady you were telling me about”. When she heard of their deaths in 1935, Pearl was devastated. She was further crushed the following year when her father George died.

During the Great Depression, the Scott family lost two homes to the Dust Bowl. Scotty worked in the oil fields while Pearl raised the children and worked various jobs. After her kids had graduated, their house burned down and they lost everything. They moved into a trailer but the strain of life on the road and the struggle to make ends meet would end their 30-year marriage. Pearl did remarry but that didn’t work out.

In 1962, divorced and destitute, Pearl moved to Oklahoma City, still clinging to her philosophy of never giving up. While studying at the Desert Willow Indian Training Center in Tucson in 1972, she rediscovered her love for her Native American heritage. Pearl became one of the tribe’s first community health representatives, who helped people access public health. She was also elected to the Chickasaw legislature in 1983, serving three terms and helping oversee the growth in tribal operations and services.

Pearl’s aerial accomplishments were unknown for sixty years until a historian discovered her exceptional life. She was inducted into the Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame, Chickasaw Nation Hall of Fame, International Women’s Air and Space Museum, and was a charter member of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian. Scott died in March 2005 at age 89 in Oklahoma City.

Her portrait was unveiled at the Oklahoma State Capitol in 2014. View the 2010 movie “Pearl” and a documentary at <https://chickasawfilms.com/Projects/Documentaries/Pearl-Carter-Scott-On-Top-of-the-World> to see how Pearl always believed that she would do something amazing with her life.