

Les Sanders Memorial Scholarship Application



The Northern CA Aerospace Initiative (NCAI) invites applicants to apply for a scholarship for funds to assist with the pursuit of their private pilot's license. As obtaining a private pilot's license is a progressive process, applicants can apply more than once, for funds to assist with the next step in the process.

This fund was established in honor of Les Sanders, pilot and flight instructor, and one of the founding members of the Northern CA Aerospace Initiative, as well as the AeroSTEM Academy and the LSA Teen Build program.

Scholarship applications are open throughout the year and submissions are considered as received. The Maximum Award is \$1,000 Per Submission. Funding is specifically designated for use towards Exams, flight Hours/Training, and Equipment. Awardees will be required to provide proof of completion for the activities and or equipment funded via the scholarship.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the scholarship applicants must; 1) be between the ages of 16 and 22, 2) Reside in Northern CA and 3) Be able to speak, read and write in English per FAA eligibility requirements, 4) Physically able to pass the Medical Certificate requirements

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications are available through your high school attendance or counseling office or online at <http://norcalaerospace.org/>. Please submit your completed application to NCAI, via email to: wearencai@gmail.com, by mail to PO Box 2083, Marysville, CA 95901: or hand deliver to NCAI, C/O CORE Charter School 321 16th St, Marysville, CA 95901.

Please fill out completely.

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Email: _____

Age: _____ Grade Level (If in School): _____

Please List Any Activities/Classes Completed Toward Receiving Your Private Pilot's License:



Les Sanders

December 26, 1941 - September 09, 2021

Les was born in Gilmer, West Virginia to Henry and Pearl Sanders. He attended elementary school near his home at a school typical of rural communities – all classes grade one through eight were housed in a single three-story building. Upon graduation from high school, Les joined the United States Army Special Forces branch. He proudly served in Viet Nam as a paratrooper and was honorably discharged at the rank of Sergeant (E-5) after his tour of duty in the 1960's. Les married an Army nurse who was based at Brook Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, near San Antonio, TX; she passed away at his home in Marysville in recent years.

Les was a regional manager for Hertz Heavy Equipment Rental prior to full-time retirement at age 65. At his retirement event, the local facilities manager praised Les for his willingness to do whatever it took to get the job done even under trying circumstances. Les' love of aviation stems back to his early years in the military when he entertained the idea of becoming a pilot during the Viet Nam war. His hopes for military flying were dashed by family obligations and the risks of flying in Viet Nam. He worked part-time as a flight instructor during his work at Hertz and got into it full-time after retirement. A friend, mentor and instructor to many aviators and teachers, Les was always ready to help in any way possible. Les was not afraid of hard work and the effort it took to achieve the various ratings and pilot licenses and provide encouragement to others to realize their goals.

Les is credited with getting the AeroSTEM Academy in Yuba City, which started as part of C.O.R.E. Charter Academy, up and running. The program offers courses in flight simulation, model aeronautic aviation and more to students in fifth through 12th grades at the Sutter County Airport. Sanders taught introduction to aerospace for many years, where he talked about the history of flight as well as flight simulation.

Chris Mahurin, executive director of CORE Charter School in Marysville, said after just one meeting with Sanders, he knew the vision about aviation education presented to him during that initial meeting was going somewhere.

“Les’ vision created the potential for aviation education, the countless opportunities for students and the local resources available to support it,” said Mahurin. “He offered to teach a class, intro to aerospace, and after Les assured me that the students would not be flying airplanes, that they would remain on the ground – I wasn’t ready for that – we added it to our schedule. Sure, let’s give it a try.”

Mahurin said that even by teaching just a single class, it was clear the difference Sanders was making in the lives of his students.

“It was evident to students that Mr. Sanders had a passion for aviation and that he genuinely wanted to share that with them,” said Mahurin.

Through the years, Mahurin said many students that participated in the academy shared fond memories or words of gratitude for Sanders, from helicopter rides to a field trip to air traffic control or the Aerospace Museum. According to Mahurin, Sanders went out of his way to help his students, by scheduling guest speakers, coordinating field trips, connecting them with the Young Eagles program and even helping them to get jobs.

“Students knew he was there for them,” said Mahurin. “They could feel it in his kind manner and they could see it in his efforts.”

Donations to the Les Sanders Memorial Scholarship can be mailed to: Northern California Aerospace Initiative, P.O. Box 2083, Marysville, CA 95901.