

**14-Year Old Helicopter Pilot Successfully Lands Back Home  
Breaking Four World Records, Greeted by Tuskegee Airmen  
Youngest Person to Solo Both a Helicopter & Airplane on Same Day  
Youngest African-American to Solo a Helicopter  
Youngest African-American to Fly a Helicopter International  
Youngest African-American to Fly a Helicopter Roundtrip Internationally**



COMPTON, CALIFORNIA, July 1, 2006-Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum today proudly announced that Jonathan Strickland, a 14-year old helicopter and airplane pilot at the museum, successfully landed a Robinson R44 helicopter at 11:05 AM PST at the Compton/Woodley Airport making him the youngest African-American pilot to fly a helicopter round trip internationally and netting him the last in a total of four world records. Jonathan's final leg home from Canada meant battling heavy turbulence along the coast of Oregon state, and flying a total of fifteen hours and over one thousand miles with stops in Portland and Medford, Oregon and Monterey and Paso Robles, California.

While in Canada, Jonathan broke three other world records becoming the youngest African-American to fly a helicopter internationally; the youngest person to solo a plane and helicopter on the same day; and the youngest African-American to fly a helicopter internationally.

I met a lot of people along the way who cheered me on to fulfill my dream of flying a plane and a helicopter on the same day", stated young pilot Jonathan Strickland. "Taking this trip gave me the opportunity to see a whole new world, and to discover that there is so much more out there for me. Hopefully, other children will see me and feel the same way about their future."

Jonathan, who was accompanied on the trip by the Executive Director of the museum Robin Petgrave, landed home to a hero's welcome by family and friends and was honored to be greeted by his

mentors, the Tuskegee Airmen, including original airmen Ted Lumpkin, Levi Thornhill, Jerry Hodges, Andrew Wallace, and Western Region Vice President Ralph Smith among others.

“Today the past represented by the Tuskegee Airmen greets the future represented by young pilot Jonathan Strickland”, stated museum Director Robin Petgrave. “These young kids are the *Compton Experiment*, children who are supposed fail, but like the men and women of the *Tuskegee Experiment*, not only accomplish great feats, but excel above all others. The children you see here will one day play a major role in America as the pilots, astronauts and engineers of the future, proudly carrying forth the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. “

On hand to greet Jonathan were Compton City Mayor Eric Perrodin with City Councilwomen Barbara Calhoun and Lillie Dobson; Deputy Supervisor Jason Seward and Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Los Angeles County Aviation Commission, Clint Simmons and Dennis Lord, representing County Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite Burke; and several members of the press including CBS, NBC, ABC, UPN, Los Angeles Times, and Plane and Pilot Magazine.

To the delight of the crowd, Jonathan was presented with a t-shirt and an application for future employment by the Los Angeles County Fire Department Air Operations Division by three of its members (Dan Fournier, Tome Federico, and Tony Moreno) who landed and took off in a Black Hawk helicopter during the ceremony.

Jonathan--whose journey to Canada first began on Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> taking off from the Compton/Woodley Airport in Compton, California, flew himself in Robinson R44 helicopter across the border into Canada using his passport for the very first time. He landed at the Boundary Bay Airport in Delta, British, Columbia the next day on Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> breaking his first world record becoming the youngest African-American to fly a helicopter internationally. Jonathan then applied and passed the Canadian requirements to solo at the age of 14 in Canada versus 16 in America. The requirements included a medical examination and two P-Star written tests: fifty questions for airplane (which he passed with a ninety percent), and 200 questions for helicopter (which he passed with a ninety-three percent).

On Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, Jonathan successfully flew a Cessna-172 airplane solo, performing four fly-bys over the skies of the Pacific Flying School located at the Boundary Bay Airport in Delta, BC, Canada at approximately 12:40 PM PST. Jonathan then transferred to Heli-College, located twenty

minutes away at Langley Airport, where he successfully flew solo a Robinson R22 helicopter at approximately 3:17 PM PST. Jonathan displayed his helicopter piloting skills by executing a full approach to a hover, a traffic pattern, and landings and take-offs. His success netted his second and third world record making him the youngest person to solo both an airplane and helicopter on the same day, and the youngest African-American to solo a helicopter.

Jonathan recently graduated from St. Francis Cabrini School and will enter the ninth grade in September 2006 as a freshman at Cleveland High School in Reseda, California. Jonathan has been training to fly since 2003, has over sixty hours of combined flight training, and goals are to become a test pilot, attend the Air Force Academy, and be a commercial pilot. His hero is Tuskegee Airmen Lee Archer, the only African-American ace pilot to shoot down five planes.

Jonathan received his training as a member of the Aviation Explorer Program at Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum, a Congressionally-recognized non-profit that teaches disadvantaged children to fly planes and helicopters, for free, in return for community service. The museum is noted for being the home of several world-recording setting young pilots mentored by Robin Petgrave and the Tuskegee Airmen that include Breean Farfan, the youngest Latina to fly roundtrip cross country (at 13); Jimmy Haywood, the youngest African-American to fly a plane roundtrip internationally (at age 11); and Kenny Roy, the youngest African-American to solo an airplane (at age 14).

Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum is located in Compton, California , telephone 310-618-1155. The website with updated photos, press releases and video of Jonathan's accomplishments can be found at [www.tamuseum.org](http://www.tamuseum.org). For questions and inquiries, please contact Cynthia Macon, 310-940-8801 or [Mmacon1960@aol.com](mailto:Mmacon1960@aol.com) or Robin Petgrave, museum Executive Director, at 310-938-2727 or [robin@celebheli.com](mailto:robin@celebheli.com).