



## Female WWII Pilot Gives \$2 Million to Flight Nursing Program

**Released:** 12/5/2011 8:35 AM EST

**Source:** [Case Western Reserve University](#)

NewsWise — A pioneering female aviator who served her country during World War II has made a gift to Case Western Reserve University's Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing — a gift that combines her love of flight and her dedication to nursing.

Alumna Dorothy E. Ebersbach, who passed away Nov. 14, has pledged \$2 million to establish the Dorothy Ebersbach Academic Center for Flight Nursing. The center will expand on the flight nursing program's mission of training graduate-level nursing students to provide critical, on-site care during emergencies and transport to medical facilities.

"This generous gift will reinforce the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing's status as a leader in flight nurse education and research," says Mary Kerr, dean of the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing. "Dorothy Ebersbach was a true innovator, which makes her support for this cutting-edge program so appropriate."

Ebersbach, a Pomeroy, Ohio, native who was born Dec. 9, 1914, led an extraordinary life. In 1943, after earning her pilot's license she applied to the Women Airforce Service Pilots. She was one of just more than 1,000 women selected to report for duty. These young women were the first trained to fly American military aircraft. They ran non-combat missions — ferrying new planes long distances from factories to military bases and testing newly overhauled aircraft, among other duties. Thirty-eight WASP fliers lost their lives while serving during the war.

The WASP was disbanded in 1944, but members were considered civilians rather than military personnel; they were not granted veteran status until the 1970s. In 2009, however, Ebersbach and her peers received the Congressional Gold Medal for their brave service.

At the time, Ebersbach said, "I was surprised. It was really a magnificent honor. It was more than I expected to receive."

Such humility and commitment to service were hallmarks of Ebersbach's life. She chose a career as a nurse and graduated from the Frances Payne Bolton School of nursing in 1954. Upon earning her degree, she went to work for the Hillsborough County Health Department in Tampa, Fla., where she worked in the field of public health until her retirement in 1975.

When an opportunity arose to give to the flight nursing program, Ebersbach was thrilled about the opportunity to support a program that was such a good personal fit for her, said Gayla Russell, a longtime friend to Ebersbach and a co-trustee of her estate.

"The flight nursing program at Case Western Reserve embodies Dorothy's

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15

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spirit and that of her generation,” Russell said.

The flight nursing center at the school of nursing is a master’s level program requiring advanced practice clinical courses, a concentration in flight nursing and participation in an internship through the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic, during which students accompany flight teams on critical transport missions. The program, the world’s first of its kind, was founded in 2002.

“Instead of just transporting patients to the hospital for treatment, acute care nurse practitioners take the hospital to the patients for immediate intervention,” said Christopher Manacci, clinical director of the program. “They work at 15,000 to 30,000 feet above the traditional clinical environment and have to think in non-traditional ways, which is something that Dorothy Ebersbach did throughout her life.”


Visit [flightnurse.case.edu](http://flightnurse.case.edu) to learn more.

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Page 2 of 3