

Southwest's First Mother/Daughter Pilot Duo Takes Flight

Since our inception, Southwest Airlines has had a passion for putting People first. From our revolutionary beginning, through unparalleled growth and great success, we've always focused on People. We're committed to providing our Southwest Family a work environment where they can be themselves and be recognized for the unique perspectives they each bring forward.

That's why we're excited to share this unique story of Southwest's first-ever mother/daughter Pilot duo, Captain Holly Petitt and First Officer Keely Petitt.



Southwest Airlines first Mother/Daughter Pilot duo, Captain Holly Petitt (left) and First Officer Keely Petitt (right) | Photograph by Schelly StoneThe Beginning

Holly Petitt started her aviation career fresh out of college as a flight attendant working for another carrier. After riding the jumpseat in the flight deck, she realized she wanted to learn to fly planes. She then got to work training and obtaining her certifications. Holly welcomed three beautiful kids and took flight lessons while supporting her family as a full-time mom. With the help of her amazing support system (her husband and mother), she was able to pursue her dream of being a pilot.



Holly and her three kids Holly first interacted with Southwest Airlines while attending a Women in Aviation (WAI) International conference. Southwest's Culture hooked her, which made her want to learn more. She applied for a scholarship sponsored by Southwest Airlines and was selected to interview. However, her interview landed on the same day as one of her other flights, and she needed to reschedule. She was so nervous about that, but when she walked into her interview, she

was commended for her commitment to her current position. Of course, Holly “passed” her interview with flying colors and landed a job at Southwest. “It was the most amazing interview of my life,” said Holly. “Eighteen years later and I’m still giddy to do my job.”



Holly Petitt has spent the last 18 years of her career working as a Pilot for Southwest Airlines | Photograph by Schelly StonePart of the Family

Southwest is known for our Heart and legendary Hospitality. We treat everyone like they're part of the family, including the family of our Cohearts.

Naturally, Holly's daughter, Keely Petitt, grew up around the Southwest Family and became an extension of it. When Keely was little, she went on a trip with her mom to San Diego. During her trip, one of Holly's Cohearts ran up to Keely to give her a big hug. She started asking about her volleyball tournaments and piano lessons and Keely was blown away by how much she cared about her in just her few interactions with her. "The Southwest Family welcomed me with open arms," said Keely.

At 14, Keely and her siblings received the gift of a discovery flight. In that moment, she realized she wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps and become a pilot. Keely began to pursue her passion for flying airplanes, earning her pilot's license, and even landed an internship at Southwest in fall 2017. Our [Campus Reach Internship Program](#) created a runway for Keely to learn more about a career in aviation.



Keely Petitt (green dress) receiving her Southwest Airlines wings. Keely loved everything about Southwest from the Culture, to flying, to everything in between, and made it her goal to come back. "Southwest was always the end goal for me," said Keely. "There was really never any other option." After working hard and keeping in touch with her Cohearts, she was able to find her way back to Southwest as a Pilot, making her and her mother Southwest's first mother/daughter Pilot duo!



Southwest Airlines first Mother/Daughter Pilot duo, Keely (left) and Holly (right) Petitt
| Photograph by Schelly StoneFlight of Their Lives

On Saturday, July 23, Holly and Keely Petitt flew their first Southwest flight together, on Flight #3658 from Denver, where the two are from, to St. Louis, making history for Southwest Airlines.



Holly and Keely Petitt celebrating their first flight together | Photograph by Schelly Stone “It’s been a dream come true,” said Holly, “First, I found this career and fell in love with it, and then that one of my kids fell into this and in love with this career too. It’s surreal.”

Our People are the Heart of Southwest. We want to ensure we're equipping our Employees so they have a career with Heart and Purpose. Not only are Holly and Keely making Southwest history, but also they're breaking barriers and empowering women of all ages to pursue their dreams in aviation, and pun intended, reach for the skies.



Holly and Keely Petitt making Southwest history on Flight #3658 from Denver to St. Louis |

Photograph by Schelly StoneDo you want to see your career take flight? Create a career and experience that's meaningful to you—a career by you, for you! Visit swa.is/workwithluv to join our Talent Community and learn about career opportunities at Southwest.