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rough, and dirty. At some point you may find yourself wanting to give up. Don't! As a woman, I've been discouraged so many times, I've lost count. What helps the most is having a support group backing me on anything I put my mind to. So I say to all females, don't let the fear of a male-dominated industry stand in the way of your dreams."

Today, Kaydee finds herself at Ag Flight in Bainbridge, Georgia, as one of only two dozen female attendees to have ever enrolled. She began as a zero time pilot, but has now accrued enough hours to have her private pilot certificate, which she received in a Citabria. Next comes the extended ag portion of the training program in which Kaydee will ultimately earn her commercial license after logging time in a Super Cub, Pawnee and Ag Cat.

A self-proclaimed thrill seeker with a need for speed, Kaydee remains grounded in her faith. "After everything is said and done, I owe it all to my copilot: God."

For those in the Ag Aviation Industry who have an expectation of who an ag pilot should be, Kaydee Mitchell is here to turn them upside down.



Gary Murphy (left) of Murphy Grain of Malden, Missouri, recently purchased a 2012 Thrush 510G from Mid-Continent Aircraft. The S2R-H80 will be flown by his niece, Kaydee Mitchell. Mid-Continent sales representative Stan Hunter (right) guided Murphy through the purchase process.



Break Expectations

by JOSH RITTENBERRY, Mid-Continent Insurance Division

Expectations are a funny thing. Expectations can be low, they can be high, and, as told in that old Dickens novel, they can be great. Expectations are also a set of unwritten rules made to be

broken.

On a cold day in December, Gary Murphy of Murphy Grain, LLC in Malden, Missouri paid a visit to Mid-Continent to inquire about the purchase of a Turbine Thrush. This kind of inquiry wasn't out of the ordinary, but when Mr. Murphy expanded on his plans for a spray plane, what shocked everyone's expectations was his choice of pilot— not a son, or husky ground crew worker. Murphy's choice of pilot was his niece, Kaydee Mitchell.

"I started chopping cotton at the age of 13, running my own crew on the family farm," Kaydee said. "All I knew at that time was I wanted to be in the ag industry. It wasn't until last summer when the idea arose. My uncle said if he had a pilot, he could buy a plane and sell one of the three ground sprayers. All of a sudden I blurted out, 'I'll do it.' A week later we were heading to Bainbridge, Georgia to do a demo flight to give me a good old fashioned gut check. I got out of the plane smiling ear to ear, looked at my family and said, 'This is what I was born to do.'"

Most Ag pilots will tell you their success begins with the support they receive outside the cockpit.

"I'm 20 years old and I have never met my biological father," Kaydee revealed. "Gary Murphy, II is the only father figure I've ever had. He's the reason this dream of mine has come true."

Another area of support for Kaydee is not far from reach. When it comes to insuring a new ag pilot, mentor pilots are a must. They provide valuable guidance and knowledge to new crops of pilots. Kaydee has the good fortune of learning the ropes from Dow Croom, with whom she grew up down the road from.

"Dow Croom is now my mentor and I couldn't be happier."

Kaydee has a few gems of wisdom for women looking to follow the path she is blazing.

"This career choice is not easy. It's going to be hard,

continued on back page

Kaydee Mitchell sits in the cockpit of the 2012 Thrush 510G purchased by her uncle, Gary Dalton Murphy, II.

