

2026 AOPA Flight Training Experience Award Winners

BEST INSTRUCTOR - NATIONAL

Tiziano Bernard - Pooler, GA

BEST FLIGHT SCHOOL - NATIONAL

Nova Pilots - Leesburg, VA

BEST INSTRUCTOR BY REGION

Central Southern

Ty Ashe
Notasulga, AL

Eastern

Grayson Bertaina
Cambridge, MA

Great Lakes

Sydney Pilling
Third Lake, IL

Pacific

Austin Smith
Newbury Park, CA

Southern

Tiziano Bernard
Pooler, GA

Western

Andrew Hamouda
Scottsdale, AZ

BEST FLIGHT SCHOOL BY REGION

Central Southern

Neu Aviation
Benton, LA

Eastern

Nova Pilots
Leesburg, VA

Great Lakes

Moore Aviation, Inc.
Beaver Falls, PA

Pacific

Mike Smith Aviation International, Inc.
Napa, CA

Southern

Centennial Aviation Academy
Atlanta, GA

Western

Sierra Charlie Aviation
Scottsdale, AZ

DISTINGUISHED INSTRUCTORS BY REGION

Central Southern

Laurence Abernathy
Wills Point, TX

Abhi Agarwal
Plano, TX

Savannah Baker
Fredericksburg, TX

Alexandra Brejnik
Houston, TX

Central Southern, continued

Matthew Buxton
Huntsville, AL

Royce Howley
Houston, TX

Blair Jones
Sanger, TX

Nicolas Moxcey
Spring, TX

Derin Reinke
Conroe, TX

Brian Rose
Kingwood, TX

Sylwester Serelko
Cypress, TX

Daniel Wiese
Dallas, TX

David Wright
Tomball, TX

John Zimmerman
Spring, TX

Eastern

Robert Berlyn
East Greenwich, RI

Basit Bukhari
Manassas, VA

Kelli W Canup
Wilmington, NC

Ashley Conway
 Mooresville, NC

Joshua Delaney
Apex, NC

Maddy Dutton
Reston, VA

Eesha Ellahi
Ashburn, VA

Brenda Garcia
Inwood, WV

Charles Garity
Leesburg, VA

Probir Goyal
Ashburn, VA

Declan Hickton
Washington, DC

Brandon Hoertsch
Woodbridge, VA

Scott Kelly
Arlington, VA

John Knapp
Stafford, VA

Elias Kontanis
Warrenton, VA

Krish Krithivasan
Ashburn, VA

Larry Levin
Lincoln, RI

Zoe Mahoney
Sutton, MA

Sebastian Massimini
Stevensville, MD

Griffin McDowell
Vienna, VA

Eastern, continued

Christopher Miller
Centreville, VA

Madison Nugent
Vienna, VA

Kenneth Solosky
Mineola, NY

Alex Tudor
Raleigh, NC

Sungchan Wang
Fairfax, VA

Anthony Wright
Warrenton, VA

Great Lakes

Charles Allen
Oconomowoc, WI

Peg (Margaret HL) Ballou
Bucyrus, OH

Richard Blamer
Chagrin Falls, OH

Ernest Boys
Libertyville, IL

Maxwell Dalby
Hampshire, IL

Anthony Greco
Roselle, IL

Kelly Koeller
Mundelein, IL

Ethan Meisenburg
Orion, IL

Jake Popovich
Lake in the Hills, IL

Nina Ricciardi
Crystal Lake, IL

Pacific

Simon Jones
Torrance, CA

Dmitriy Kosovski
Mountain View, CA

Pedro Millikan
Berkeley, CA

Mikayla Murphy
Fairfield, CA

John O'Leary
Mountain View, CA

Campbell Potter
Santa Rosa, CA

Nick Schuttish
Napa, CA

Michael Smith
Napa, CA

Samuel Tarrel
Hillsboro, OR

Kevin Wong
Dublin, CA

Southern

Taegoon Bae
Daytona Beach, FL

Rafael Dubena
Daytona Beach, FL

Lenny Gartenberg
Melbourne, FL

Jorge Gonzalez
Hialeah, FL

Anthony Henderson
Hoschton, GA

Kurt Belsten
Melbourne Beach, FL

Barry Loomis
Hypoluxo, FL

Collin McDonald
South Carthage, TN

Stefano Santonico
North Palm Beach, FL

Logan Yoon
Franklin, TN

Western

Dawn Cook
Bemidji, MN

Don Hendrickson
Helena, MT

Jacob Peery
Gilbert, AZ

Milne "CC" Pocock
Cal-Nev-Ari, NV

Thomas Sando
Williston, ND

Jake Strong
Butte, MT

Benjamin Zapalac
Burton, TX

DISTINGUISHED FLIGHT SCHOOLS BY REGION

Central Southern

Tulsa Aviation Group, LLC (TAG)
Claremore, OK

Airplanes & Attitude Flight School
McKinney, TX

Pilot Rise, LLC
Fort Worth, TX

In The Pattern Flight School
Denton, TX

Black Hound Aviation
Austin, TX

Code 1 Flight Training
Canton, TX

Pegasus Flight School
Waco, TX

U.S. Flight Co.
Des Moines, IA

Central Southern, continued

Vertical Visions Flight Academy

Waukee, IA

Thrust Flight

Addison, TX

Bird Dog Flight Services

Aledo, TX

Future Flyers of Iowa

Winterset, IA

Eastern

Avier Flight School

Beverly, MA

Air Fleet Training Systems, Inc.

Fairfield, NJ

Air Ventures Flying School

Smithfield, RI

FCA Flight Center, Inc.

Fitchburg, MA

High Tide Aviation

Southport, NC

Mil2ATP, Inc.

Pikeville, NC

Chesapeake Sport Pilot

Stevensville, MD

Cape Fear Aviation Flight Training

Fayetteville, NC

Pilot in Training Flight Academy

Gaithersburg, MD

Aviation Adventures – Manassas

Fairfax Station, VA

East Coast Aero Club, Inc. – Norwood, MA

Norwood, MA

Centerline Aviation Services LLC

Iron Station, NC

Great Lakes

Keystone Aviation Group

Paxinos, PA

Blue Skies Flying Services, Inc.

Lake in the Hills, IL

High Flight Academy

Butler, PA

Pacific

Next Level Tailwheel

San Mateo, CA

14DAYPILOT Flight Academy, LLC.

Van Nuys, CA

DuBois Aviation

Chino, CA

Southern

D&J Aviation (X04)

Apopka, FL

D&J Aviation (SFB)

Sanford, FL

Southern, continued

First Landings Aviation
Apopka, FL

Tennessee Flight Training
Nashville, TN

USAeroFlight, LLC
Greenville, SC

Melbourne Flight Training
Indialantic, FL

Sun City Aviation Academy
Pembroke Pines, FL

Aviation Zone Academy
Miami, FL

Kingsky Flight Academy
Lakeland, FL

Hawkins Flight Academy
Shelbyville, TN

Jumpers Away
Taylors, SC

Aamro Aviation
West Palm Beach, FL

Atlas Aviation
Tampa, FL

Western

Fargo Jet Center
Fargo, ND

Leopard Aviation
Scottsdale, AZ

Rocky Mountain USSF Flight Training Center / Aero
Colorado Springs, CO

Bush Air
Cal-Nev-Ari, NV

Barnstormers Aviation
Bemidji, MN

AV8 Flight School
Eden Prairie, MN

Arizona Flight Training Center
Peoria, AZ

Chennault Flying Service
North Las Vegas, NV

IFLY Pilot Training
Marana, AZ