

It was early summer 1994 when Scott and Jeanette Stearns brought their son Tim to the SPF airport, earlier that year they had bought him an airplane ride for his birthday. I had the privilege of giving Tim his first ride in a C172, N1373E. We flew over Spearfish, Belle Fourche and his grandfathers farm west of Belle. Tim caught the flying bug, he may have already had it but it was confirmed that day. The next year he started private pilot ground school with Lyn Smeenk in Belle Fourche. Tim continued with his flight training and later worked for Laura and Ray Jilek instructing in N1373E.

Tim is now a pilot for Southwest Airlines. I had the honor and privilege crewing a new B737-Max8 with him from LAS-DEN-LAS on April 3, 2022. What a special moment, to think 28 years ago I gave a young man his first airplane ride and now we are flying together again with 175 passengers and six crew members. Just remember guys and gals, we as pilots can have a lasting affect on people. I never pass up an opportunity to give someone a ride in my Cub, as long as it's not too windy.

We all have had those special moments in aviation. I am forever grateful to Dan Custis. Dan owned Star Aviation in SPF and gave me my first flying job after graduating from the University of North Dakota. Mike Ginther, from Lemmon, was a big help in that deal. Mike put me in touch with Dan and gave me a recommendation. Dan was a very wise and experienced pilot who loved to teach. His words of wisdom saved me more than once over the years. Let's all do what we can to pass on our knowledge, experience and love of flying.

Fly Safe

Shannon Doe



At the Gate in Las Vegas



On the ramp in Denver