



## *Two Friends of the Foundation:* **J.R. and Ginger Scott**

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***Learn to fly.  
Buy a plane.  
Give back to others.***

Of course, those aren't the only goals that J.R. and Ginger Scott have set and achieved over the years, and they may never even have articulated them or put them in that order. But they are the underpinnings of the life this couple has been constructing, and if their persistence flags, they have only to look up and out at the limitless horizons of the sky in order to dig back in and forge ahead.

J.R. was six years old when a neighbor buckled him and his mother into the passenger seats of a small plane, taxied down a grassy runway, and lifted them up and up with lazy loops over their Russellville farm. "That was it," J.R. grins. "My mom was queasy, but I was hooked." Even today, the sound of an aircraft engine pulls him to windows and through doors, "just to see what's up there."

"One of the first things J.R. told me when we started dating was that he wanted to fly," Ginger recalls. "The more we talked about it, and I learned to read gauges and navigation charts, the more fun it was. I vowed—to myself—that we were going to do this." "It was hard to envision," adds J.R. "I only knew two people with planes—a lawyer and a veterinarian. I didn't know how someone like me could do it." Ginger says, "I would just say to myself that we are going to make this happen."

So, with hard work on both their parts, in 1997, J.R. earned his private pilot's certification, and he and Ginger bought a 1968 Piper Cherokee, which they've since kept in two different hangars and refurbished once.

The ability to fly, to get into their own plane and experience the world from a different perspective, never dulls for them. A favorite activity for both Scotts is to give children—or adults—their first ride in a small plane. They both beam with pleasure at the recollections of every eye-opening excursion. Sometimes J.R. lets them "help" fly; Ginger points out familiar landmarks below.

J.R. is also passionate about the Putnam County Airport. Both as a user of the facilities, and president of the board of directors for the airport, he sees how beneficial the airport is to Putnam County. "It's not just a playground for the rich," he says. "The airport's existence has lured corporations to Putnam County. DePauw alumni and other visitors use it all the time. The airport is often the first—and sometimes, the only—place in the county that people see, and that forms their impression of us."

But the airport is not the only place in Putnam County that benefits from the enthusiastic and talented efforts of Team Scott. In addition to their full-time jobs, the pair are also involved with a variety of other organizations, from the Putnam County Chapter of the American Red Cross to the Rotary Club to, to the Mary Allison Children's Trust to, of course, the Putnam County Community Foundation, where Ginger has served on the board of directors and a variety of committees. In 2005, Ginger was honored with the Spirit of Philanthropy award, the highest award the Community Foundation bestows.



**J.R. and Ginger Scott, 2013**

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Modestly, Ginger calls these activities her “hobbies,” but that doesn’t keep her from bringing her serious talents to each group. She is gifted at creating synergies between different organizations to benefit all of them.

Airport Days (the weekend after Labor Day) is one example where she helps orchestrate, along with the Putnam County Airport Appreciation Days Group, the participation of many groups to compose a family-friendly event that is both fun and educational. “We all have one goal—to make Putnam County a great place to live and work, and to let others know about it,” she says. “So it makes sense to plan events that many organizations can support. It’s easier for them, and easier for those who attend.”

As absorbing and satisfying as all their volunteer hours have been, several years ago J.R. and Ginger began another conversation with one another. “We do feel strongly that we want to leave things better than we found them,” Ginger explains, “and we came to realize that we wanted to do something more than just what we do everyday...something that would carry on our passion for flying and belief in the continuing importance of aviation. We weren’t exactly thinking of a legacy, just something we could do now that would always help young people to be a part of the world of aviation.”

Just as when they planned and worked hard so J.R. could learn to fly, and then planned and worked even harder to get their own plane, they began to think hard about what would reflect their values and pass on their beliefs.

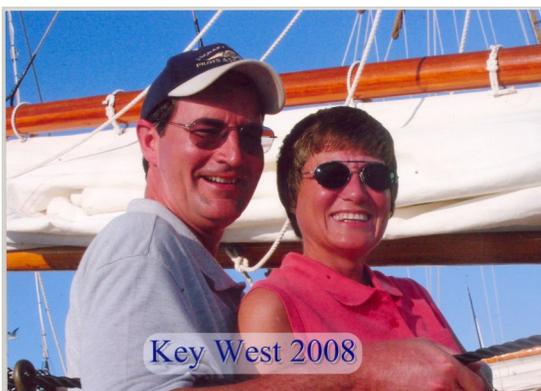
They knew that in this task, the ideal partner would be the Putnam County Community Foundation. “We knew, with the Foundation’s help, we could take something we enjoy, and make something for the future,” explains Ginger.

So they crafted a plan for a special scholarship. Its purpose is to provide educational financial support to students pursuing post-secondary education or certification in the field of aviation. Their scholarship, the J.R. and Ginger Scott Scholarship for Aviation was added to the Community Foundation’s roster in 2008, and will soon make its first distribution. “We’re really looking forward to meeting the candidates,” Ginger says. “We hope we can mentor them, as well as have the scholarship help with their expenses.”

J.R. agrees. “We’ve found that people who are around planes tend to be very responsible, detail-oriented, and considerate of others... Flying is a different way of seeing the world. You’re very focused on what you are doing, but you can be reflective at the same time. We want to encourage young people to be involved in this field that is so important, both now and in the future.” “There are really so many options,” adds Ginger, “from engineering and mechanics to flying or airport management...or something we haven’t thought of yet.”

While they wait to meet their scholars and to see what the future holds for aviation, the Scotts keep on flying, taking care of their plane, and looking for more ways to give back to Putnam County because...because it’s how they live their life. It isn’t as simple as one, two, three, but “we see how everything is connected,” says Ginger, “and it’s fun.”

“Yes,” agrees J.R.



**NOTE:** *Written by Anna Lyon Baker, this is the third in a series of stories about Foundation “friends” who have made a positive impact on the quality of life in our community. The Community Foundation welcomes suggestions of other people who should be recognized as Friends of the Foundation, and we remain deeply grateful for the friendship and support of so many people, near and far. Thank you!*

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