



2022 Jasper Harris, Jr. Aviation Scholarship



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My robust interest in aviation, as well as my life experiences, afforded me an opportunity to become a 2019 Red-Tailed Hawks Flight Lessons for Youth (FLY) cadet. *Red Tailed Hawks Flying Club (RTH)* allowed me to improve my knowledge and explore my passion for flying. I received my Private Pilot Certificate June of 2021 with financial assistance from RTH. RTH uses aviation to promote the STEM fields, also known as, science, technology, engineering and mathematics. I intend to exemplify the RTH mission by telling my story to inspire, and encourage underrepresented people like myself.

For as long as I can remember, it has always been my dream to become a pilot. But, ironically, it was not often that I would see a plane fly by where I grew up. I was raised in a small village in Eritrea, located in East Africa. I used to stare at the occasional planes as they broke through the sky and disappeared into their next location. This reminds me of how my family and I escaped war in Eritrea and had to flee to save our lives. We sought asylum in Ethiopia when I was ten years old, where we lived in a refugee camp for about five years before moving to the United States. In each of my interactions with planes, I remember saying confidently, "One day, I will be the person flying this."

My personal story heavily resonates with the mission of RTH. As an underrepresented pilot, it is important that, like Jasper Harris, Jr., I am reminded of my legacy, which is what motivates me to break barriers. English was an unfamiliar language, and communication was very hard for my family as we grew into our new life in the United States. Yet, even at an early age, I understood the level of sacrifice my parents made for me to have a better future, and I knew that education would be the catalyst for my successful future ahead.

