

## **The Original Flying Nun Marks 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Historic Flight**

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Package / Natsnd Package with Sound Bites (TRT 2:29)

### **Anchor Lead:**

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE USE OF A HELICOPTER TO TRANSPORT A CRITICALLY ILL PATIENT WAS NOT TO COMMONPLACE. FIFTY YEARS AGO, A NUN, A HELICOPTER PILOT AND A PREMATURE BABY MADE HISTORY. SHELLI DANKOFF HAS THE STORY.

### **VO (B-roll historical photos)**

ON JANUARY 10, 1967...THE FIRST HELICOPTER TRANSPORT OF A PREMATURE INFANT TOOK PLACE FROM ZION, ILLINOIS – NEAR THE WISCONSIN BORDER – TO WHAT IS NOW KNOWN AS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF ILLINOIS AT OSF SAINT FRANCIS MEDICAL CENTER IN PEORIA. THAT'S MORE THAN 400 MILES ROUND TRIP.

### **SOT/CG: Shannon Perry/Pioneered Helicopter Transport of Premature Babies**

"The baby was in the hospital 8 hours after he was born. The nursery at Saint Francis was opened in 1941, so it was one of the very early ones in the country to have a premature infant station. So I really was the original flying nun." [:17]

### **VO (B-roll Flying Nun intro, historical photos)**

THE TELEVISION SHOW BY THAT NAME STARRING SALLY FIELD AS SISTER BERTRILLE DIDN'T PREMIER UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1967. THE HELICOPTER WAS OWNED BY THE PEORIA JOURNAL STAR. ONLY THE PILOT AND SISTER ANDRE COULD FIT AND CARRIED THE BABY IN WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED A PRIMITIVE INCUBATOR BY TODAY'S STANDARDS.

### **SOT/CG: Shannon Perry**

"We had to modify the helicopter, and they had a mechanic who took out one of the seats and built a platform. It was on springs to absorb shock and then there was a wooden platform on top of that. And if I remember correctly, we fastened the incubator with a bungee cord to this platform, and when we put the baby in the incubator I pinned a diaper over him to stabilize him, which looking back it wouldn't have done any good at all but it made us feel better that we were trying to stabilizing him a little bit." [:33]

### **VO (B-roll historical photos, Shannon Perry getting for and boarding Life Flight helicopter for flight)**

AS THE NEONATAL CRITICAL CARE UNIT AS IT'S CALLED NOW BEGINS A YEAR-LONG CELEBRATION MARKING ITS 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, THE ORIGINAL FLYING NUN, SHANNON PERRY (WHO SUBSEQUENTLY LEFT THE ORDER) RETURNED TO PEORIA TO RE-CREATE THAT HISTORIC FLIGHT ON THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY.

IN 1967, OSF TRANSPORTED SIX BABIES USING THE JOURNAL STAR HELICOPTER. IT NOW OPERATES THE BUSIEST MEDICAL AIR AMBULANCE PROGRAM IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS WITH FOUR HELICOPTERS OF ITS OWN LOGGING MORE THAN 22-HUNDRED FLIGHTS ANNUALLY. SHANNON PERRY IS HUMBLED BY WHAT THE PROGRAM SHE STARTED HAS BECOME.

### **SOT/CG: Shannon Perry**

"Just from the start this little bitty thing to blow into this. I'm really looking forward to the flight and I'm very excited about it. And I'm also grateful that Saint Francis and you all are giving me the opportunity. I think that's marvelous." [:21]

### **VO (B-roll flight re-creation landing at the hospital)**

FOR THE OSF HEALTHCARE NEWS NETWORK, I'M SHELLI DANKOFF