

Knowing Andre Lewis “Still Flying High”

Andre Lewis was always a dreamer and had high hopes to go somewhere and do more. One of those “somewheres” was to fly. It was through some childhood trials, much determination and a yearning for education that Lewis achieved not only his goals but also the desire to help others achieve their dreams. He always recognized that without the push, support and mentorship of others his dream of becoming a pilot would have only been that – a child’s dream.



Born in Columbus, Mississippi, Andre was the oldest of three children and moved often because his father was in the military. Life was not always easy for Lewis. As a toddler he was burned by an electric pan of hot grease leaving both physical and emotional scars. He learned very quickly that the scarred outside did not define who he was on the inside. What it did do was make him desire more and work that much harder to achieve his dreams.

As a youngster, he was close to his grandfather and learned much of his work ethic from his “Granddaddy.” As he worked side-by-side with his grandfather, who made the best barbeque in Mississippi, he learned more than a few good recipes. His grandfather encouraged his dreams to be a pilot showing him that with hard work and commitment, he could literally fly and could achieve anything he wanted to do. His boyhood with his grandfather was the inspiration for his first book, *I Want to Fly*.

Andre left the comfort of his mother’s home when he was in tenth grade, moving to California to live with his father. Knowing that schooling was his road to greater opportunities, he felt that he would receive a better education in California. It was not always easy but this was his shot to reach his goal of flying. Going back to Mississippi no matter how tough it was at times living with a father who was not supportive, was not an option. He had no safety net. At one point he needed to take the ACT that cost \$10 and his father refused to give him the money. He ended up asking his friend’s mother if he could borrow the money. She not only gave him the \$10, but told him if he needed a ride, she would be happy to take him. He realized

that there are “angels” out there willing to help and it reinforced his childhood desire to do the same for others.

Upon graduation, he went to UPT (Undergraduate Pilot Training) for one year and finished in the top three of his class. He received his first choice of aircraft, C-141 at Travis AFB in Fairfield, California. He was stationed there for five years and obtained the distinction of landing an airplane on every continent. He finished his Air Force career at Altus AFB in Altus, Oklahoma where he taught other pilots how to fly the C-141. After nine years of service, he decided to become a commercial pilot. He has been a pilot for Federal Express for 22 years, has been married for 24 years and is the proud father of three daughters who moved him to write, *A Daddy’s Dream*.



Now in a position to fulfill his dream of doing for others, Andre set out to make that dream a reality. He never forgot that others had helped him along the way whether it was \$10, a teacher who mentored him or a schoolmate proclaiming that “he would never make it.” An avid reader since childhood and knowing that it helped him throughout his schooling, he wanted books to be available to all. It was with this intent that he founded **Literary Tools**, a non-profit that offers themed, lesson-learning books written by Lewis for children, schools and communities.

As the author of more than 18 books that have been distributed to more than one million students, schools and organizations worldwide, Lewis is not done, because once a dreamer always a dreamer. He continues to write books, speak to schools and civic organizations, volunteer in both his community and worldwide locations; and as much as he continues to fly . . . he wants to help others find their wings so they too can soar!