

"Golden Wings: Fifty Year Flight Path" began humbly as a 9-minute student project for a documentary film class taught by accomplished documentarian Janice Engle at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. Filmed with no budget and using only a Samsung S20 and Filmic Pro, the original cut was raw and straightforward, completed in March 2023. However, when filmmaker Caleb Mills Stewart showed the initial film to an acquaintance, who was moved to tears despite not knowing Caleb's mother or her story, he recognized the potential for something much greater.

Realizing he had a deeper story to tell, Caleb expanded the documentary to include his mother's struggles with alcohol dependency, a topic absent from the original version. He started submitting a rough cut to smaller film festivals, where Golden Wings quickly garnered accolades for its powerful storytelling and intimate portrayal, including:

Best Documentary Short at Clown International Film Festival
Best Mobile Short at the Independent Shorts Awards
Best Short Documentary and Best First-Time Director at Magic Silver Screen
Best Short Documentary at the International Guadalajara Film Awards
Best Short Cinematography at Silicon Beach Film Festival
Most Outstanding at the NewsFest Film Festival
Most Inspiring at the NewsFest Film Festival
Best Trailer NewsFest Film Festival
Best Documentary at ARFF Amsterdam

The documentary's premiere at Silicon Beach Film Festival in Los Angeles marked a turning point, with Golden Wings receiving the Best Short Cinematography award. The film's success at Silicon Beach not only highlighted its visual achievements but also underscored its emotional resonance and universality, drawing strong reactions from audiences and industry professionals alike.

In August 2023, Caleb conducted a pivotal interview with Jock Bethune, a media production specialist with connections to his family's aviation history, which he later integrated into the film after the Silicon Beach premiere. Now, with added voiceover narration and a newly recorded epilogue, Caleb has crafted what he considers a "picture-locked" version—a more complete and mature film, offering audiences an even deeper journey.

The film's ties stretch across many meaningful locations that shaped Caleb and his mother's lives: the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex as the heart of her aviation career, Austin where Caleb attended college, Spain where he studied abroad at the University of the Balearic Islands, San Francisco where the film was born in a classroom, Frankfurt and Tokyo as key flight destinations, and New York City as a vibrant part of their travel history. Together, these places underscore the universality of Golden Wings, connecting audiences from around the world through the story of one family's journey.11:08 AM
12/21/2024

The most recent screening was the first that included the closing letter. Caleb didn't even think of it until 2 weeks before the screening. He was unsure of whether it was the right choice. He received confirmation shortly after the screening when a complete stranger approached him. It was a woman of his mother's generation. She wanted to say how much the film meant to her as a mother. This was for the Newsgest at which the film won three awards. Caleb will continue to refine the film until it officially releases some time in 2025.

In March of 2025 Golden wings screened at the beyond Hollywood International Films Festival at the LA Regal Live. and it qualified as one of the finalists for best short documentary. It was also recently nominated for best short documentary at the International Guadalajara Film Awards, taking place on June the second. Followed by the Mexican del Rey Film Festival on June 20th.

In July 2025 the film notched another win at the Swedish International Film Festival's 26

iteration for Best Short Documentary proving the film not only has wings but legs.

In August of 2025, Robyn Stewart was given the official title of Legacy Producer for the film. The title recognizes her pivotal contributions to the film's development, including securing a key interview that deepened the documentary's historical scope.