



Though she flew commercial airlines for a brief time and is a training instructor at a flight simulator in Toronto, the adrenaline rush of piloting surveillance aircraft ultimately has hooked her. "The passenger flying is not my thing. The surveillance flying, the general law enforcement, search and rescue, that's more my cup of tea."

Morgan is currently a maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) surveillance pilot contracted, through her Canadian employer, with the Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard. She lives with her husband on Curaçao, a small Caribbean island north of Venezuela, and is sent out for a range of missions from identifying illegal fishing to stopping drug smuggling. It's the search and rescue calls where she flies aircraft that drops life rafts to people in need that make her proudest to be a pilot.

"I like to make a difference," she says. "Finding people that are missing is really rewarding."

Morgan had the opportunity to do that last summer after Hurricane Irma devastated the nearby island of St. Maarten. "Initially we were the only ones flying into St. Maarten," she says. "We were the first responders, taking up the initial troops, the Marines, and supplies. There wasn't a picture or a video that could actually describe what they went through up there."



### Role model to a T

Over the past few years, Morgan has better appreciated how being both an IRONMAN athlete and a female air pilot inspires other women, especially young girls, to seek out what energizes them professionally and physically.

In 2015, Morgan was invited to be a guest speaker at a Women in Leadership dinner at her alma mater, Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. With less than seven percent of pilots in the world female, Morgan's unique stories about being an IRONMAN athlete and a search-and-rescue pilot made an impression.

"With young girls coming up to me in awe that I have done an IRONMAN and I fly airplanes, I saw how important it was that I share what I do," she says. "There is so much pressure in society today, so it's important they see that they can do anything."

Morgan also wanted to convey how IRONMAN training and racing have shown her to listen to what her brain and body are telling her, and to be confident what she is feeling. "There are lots of books, lots of people telling you this is how you should do things, and I think one of the most important things I have learned is there is no one right method. It's knowing what your own personal balance is."

All of these factors combined in her decision to apply for *Quest for Kona*: "An IRONMAN world TV special is a really good way to show that, yes, girls can do it all."

### Solid sister

Morgan's older brother Jody (see photo above) provides a chief source of motivation for this driven woman. As the two middle kids sandwiched between sisters, Kathie and Jody have a special bond mixing sibling rivalry and support for each others' IRONMAN training and racing.

Himself an IRONMAN athlete who has notched close to 40 full IRONMAN races (about three every year) and 10 races at Kona, Jody introduced his sister to IRONMAN in 2003.

Having persuaded her a few years prior to do a marathon, and with new-found excitement about finishing his first IRONMAN, Jody decided that Kathie should also try one. Persuaded, Morgan signed up for IRONMAN Lake Placid. "My first triathlon was an IRONMAN. It was, go big or go home," she says.

Since that race in 2003, Kathie has focused on racing IRONMAN 70.3s—typically, one in the spring and one in the fall. She and Jody text training updates daily, offering long-distance encouragement and, as competitive siblings often do, measuring how they stack up against each other through the season.



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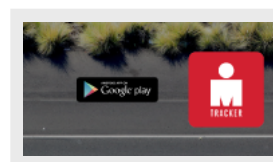
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They also help each other during challenging times. On a training ride in August 2010, Morgan was struck by a truck, destroying her bike and shaking her confidence. Morgan stopped cycling and racing until Jody gave her an emotional, tearful boost in 2011. "We were in Kona and my brother helped me get back on my bike and start biking again. And I haven't looked back."

After years of being supported by their families at the IRONMAN World Championship, Jody told Kathie that it was time for the family to cheer her on, and that she should attempt to qualify this year and do it as part of *Quest for Kona*. Upon being accepted, Morgan's qualification journey begun at this year's IRONMAN South Africa (her first IRONMAN since Lake Placid 15 years ago), which she raced with her brother. "(He) says he races better when I am on the start line with him, not watching," she adds.

If the past is an indicator, Morgan won't let her brother down.

Following a successful debut last year, IRONMAN is again presenting [Quest for Kona](#), a television series that documents the highs and lows of 10 athletes attempting to qualify for the 2018 IRONMAN World Championship this October in Hawaii. Tune in to [Quest for Kona](#) to follow Kathie Morgan's qualification journey.

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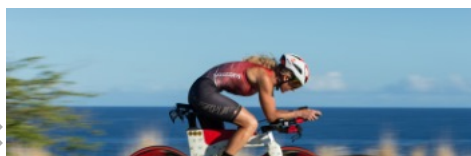
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