

LCol (Ret'd) Maryse Carmichael

Canada's First Female Snowbird Pilot

LEADERSHIP · HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAMS · LEADING UNDER PRESSURE · SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT · COMMUNICATION · WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

THE PITCH

The first woman to fly with the Snowbirds shows leaders how to perform in formation when stakes, speed, and scrutiny peak.

FULL BIO

At a young age, Lieutenant-Colonel (Retired) Maryse Carmichael was introduced to aviation by her family. As soon as she was of age, she followed in her three brothers' footsteps and joined the Royal Canadian Air Cadets with 630 Squadron, in Quebec City, where she obtained both her glider and private pilot licenses.

She started her adventure as a military pilot in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1990. Over her 22-year career, she accumulated nearly 3,500 hours on three main aircraft types; the CT-114 Tutor, the CE and CC 144 Challenger and the CC-130 Hercules and was posted to ten Canadian Armed Forces bases throughout Canada.

In November 2000, Maryse made history when she was selected to fly with 431 Air Demonstration Squadron, the Canadian Armed Forces' Snowbirds, becoming the Team's first woman pilot as well as the first woman in the world to fly on a Jet Demonstration Team.

Maryse also served as a Qualified Flying Instructor with 2CFFTS, as the Operations Officer on 436 Transport Squadron, and as the Deputy Wing Operations Officer at 3 Wing Bagotville. The highlight of her career was to lead the men and women of 431 (Air Demonstration) Squadron, the Canadian Armed Forces Snowbirds, as their Commanding Officer from May 2010 to July 2013.

The recipient of many awards and an Honourary Diploma, Maryse was recognized in 2005 in the Top 100 as one of Canada's Most Powerful Women by the Women Executive Network and in 2013 she was the recipient of the Elsie MacGill Northern Lights Award. She is a graduate of the Aerospace and Aviation Global Executive MBA from the Toulouse Business School in France.

LCol (Ret'd) Carmichael was inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame in October 2022 and the Panthéon de l'Air et de l'Espace du Québec in 2024.

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SIGNATURE KEYNOTES**Breaking the Flight Ceiling: Leading with Courage When the Pressure Is Highest.**

Maryse Carmichael didn't just break barriers—she flew straight through them. As the first woman in the world to fly on a military jet demonstration team and later the Commanding Officer of the Canadian Forces Snowbirds, she led elite teams through high-stakes environments where precision, culture, and trust meant everything.

In this keynote, Maryse shares the leadership principles that carried her from a young Air Cadet in Quebec City to leading one of the most iconic aviation teams on the planet. She brings audiences into the cockpit—where split-second decisions, psychological readiness, and unwavering teamwork determine success or failure.

Attendees will learn how to:

- Lead confidently through uncertainty and change
- Build cultures rooted in trust, accountability, and shared purpose
- Recognize and overcome self-doubt and limiting beliefs
- Elevate performance when expectations and pressure are at their highest

This is a keynote that inspires boldness, earns trust, and reminds organizations what's possible when they empower people to fly beyond expectations.

Flying in Formation: How High-Performance Teams Communicate, Collaborate, and Win.

High-performance teams don't happen by accident — they're built with intention, communication, discipline, and humility. Maryse Carmichael has lived this at the highest level, having served as both a Snowbird pilot and the leader responsible for bringing nine aircraft, 80 personnel, and a national demonstration program together in perfect synchrony.

In this deeply practical and inspiring session, she reveals what elite aviation teams can teach organizations about collaboration, psychological safety, and performance under pressure. Drawing on nearly 3,500 flight hours across multiple aircraft and missions, Maryse illustrates how alignment, clarity, and culture determine outcomes long before execution begins.

Audiences walk away with tools to:

- Strengthen communication in fast-moving environments
- Foster psychological safety and trust across diverse teams
- Build alignment around mission, purpose, and expectations
- Translate high-performance habits from aviation to everyday work

Ideal for organizations focused on teamwork, culture transformation, operational excellence, workforce readiness, and leadership development.

The Power of Firsts: Breaking Barriers Without Breaking Yourself.

Becoming the first at anything is never simple — especially when all eyes are on you. When Maryse Carmichael joined the Snowbirds as their first female pilot, she wasn't just navigating a new role; she was navigating scrutiny, self-doubt, cultural expectations, and the weight of being a symbol for others.

This keynote is a powerful exploration of resilience, confidence, and leading with integrity when you are building a path that didn't exist before. Maryse shares candid stories about forging forward in environments where she had to earn trust, prove capability, and still show up as herself — not a stereotype or a symbol.

Audiences will learn how to:

- Challenge limiting beliefs — their own and others'
- Break barriers with purpose and without burnout
- Navigate visibility, expectations, and pressure
- Build resilience through preparation, clarity, and values
- Lead with authenticity and inspire others to rise behind you

This keynote is particularly powerful for women's leadership programs, emerging leaders, students, and organizations committed to inclusion, empowerment, and representation.

IMAGE LIBRARY

Original high-resolution color files are included alongside this PDF in the ZIP download.



PORTRAIT



STAGE

BOOK THIS SPEAKER

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Full digital profile, video reel, and additional press-kit assets: spokenartists.com/speakers/maryse-carmichael