

Statement

On Saturday, Nov. 17, 2018 about 11am, I was the right seat pilot in a 1966 Piper Cherokee N111TA, sn 28-3746 registered to Clear Blue Sky Aviation LLC. The left seat was occupied by fellow owner and student pilot Thomas O. Goss. The back seats were occupied by Mr. Goss's daughter Lindsay Goss and stepdaughter Kyndall Carroll. Earlier that morning, we had flown from KMAC to GA86 in VFR conditions with winds from the northwest at about 3 knots, temperature increasing from 34 at the time of initial weather briefing that morning, ceiling and visibility unlimited. We made an uneventful takeoff on runway 28 at KMAC and did some sightseeing over the Macon area and an uneventful grass landing on runway 36 at GA86, a well-maintained 3'000 x 100 turf runway. We spent about 30-45 minutes on the ground at GA86 for business purposes. During that time the wind increased to an estimated 7 to 8 knots from about 350 degrees.

Runup was normal and we taxied to runway 36 using soft field technique as it had rained for about week ending a day or two prior to the flight. We considered using runway 18 for downslope and clearway but chose runway 36 since winds were stronger and increasing. I chose a prominent hangar representing about 60% of the runway length as fly/no fly decision point. Acceleration seemed normal considering upslope and airspeed had reached 65 and increasing at the decision point. After rotation which I did not perceive as abrupt the airplane began an

unexpected left bank rather than an anticipated left yaw secondary to weathervaning. At no time did I observe the stall warning light come on. Mr. Goss communicated lack of responsiveness of controls simultaneous with my announcing taking controls. At this point it became clear that we would not clear the treeline nor did we have sufficient time or altitude to complete a 180 degree left turn and our best option was to fully reduce power, level the wings, and put the airplane on the ground and aim the fuselage between trees. We made a hard landing perhaps 200 feet short of the tree line into relatively soft muddy grass and came to rest after impacting several small and one large tree. Fuel was closed, ignition and master switches cut off. The right fuel tank appeared to be compromised. Mr. Goss and the passengers indicated that they were OK and we unfastened lap belts and evacuated the aircraft thru the cockpit door. Mr. Phillip Borders, a business associate, responded to the site before we exited and I noted that he had difficulty stopping his vehicle due to muddy conditions about 30 feet off the right wing.