

December 17, 2008



First Flight Society Honors Southwest Airlines Founder and Chairman Emeritus Herbert D. Kelleher

Kelleher inducted to the Paul E. Garber First Flight Shrine

DALLAS, Dec. 17 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Southwest Airlines' Chairman Emeritus, Herb Kelleher, was inducted today into the Paul E. Garber First Flight Shrine in the Wright Brothers National Memorial by the First Flight Society of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. With the unveiling of Kelleher's portrait in the event, the First Flight Society honored the founder of the nation's most successful commercial airline.

The Paul E. Garber First Flight Shrine event was held on the original site where the first powered, controllable flight was flown in 1903 by the Wright Brothers. The First Flight Society was formed in 1927 and over the years has celebrated the men and women whose accomplishments have advanced aviation.

"Just like the Wright Brothers, Southwest Airlines and its People defied all doubters and pessimists to create a great success story," Kelleher said. "We are an airline that broke the mold in the aviation industry, and we intend to keep on breaking it."

Celebrating 82 years, the First Flight Society commemorates the conquest of the air by brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright, and commemorates the great achievements in the airline industry with this event.

"The First Flight Society is proud today to honor Herb Kelleher, a pioneer in the commercial airline industry," said Bill Harris, President of the First Flight Society. "To honor him is to honor those who have a vision and make it real. Southwest Airlines would not be what it is today without Herb."

Southwest is the only U.S. airline to remain consistently profitable this decade and enjoys an unprecedented string of 35 consecutive years of profitability. Southwest has among the lowest cost structures, a strong balance sheet, and the most comprehensive fuel hedging program of any major U.S. airline. At Southwest Airlines, fees don't fly with us. You can check your first two bags for free, there are no change fees, no fees for a window or aisle seat, and, as always, snacks, sodas, and smiles are all complimentary!

After 37 years of service, Southwest Airlines, the nation's leading low-fare carrier, continues to differentiate itself from other airlines -- offering a reliable product with exemplary Customer Service. Southwest Airlines is the most productive airline in the sky and offers Customers a comfortable traveling experience. Southwest offers a very comfortable ride with all premium leather seats and plenty of legroom with a young all Boeing 737 fleet. Southwest recently updated its gate areas and improved its boarding procedure to make flying Southwest even more convenient and simple. Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV), the nation's largest carrier in terms of domestic passengers enplaned, currently serves 64 cities (will begin service to

Minneapolis-St. Paul in March 2009) in 32 states. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,300 flights a day and has more than 35,000 Employees systemwide.

About Herb D. Kelleher:

Founder and Chairman Emeritus

Herb Kelleher is a Founder of Southwest Airlines Co. and served as Executive Chairman from March 1978 to May 2008 and as President and CEO from September 1981 through June 2001.

Southwest commenced service with 3 airplanes in 1971 and today operates a fleet of more than 527 airplanes performing over 3,400 flights per day. Kelleher's Company has been profitable for 35 consecutive years and has never furloughed an Employee. The Fall 2002 edition of Money magazine revealed that, during the 30-year period 1972-2002, Southwest produced the highest return to shareholders of any company included in the S&P 500 during that 30-year period: \$10,000 invested in Southwest in 1972 was worth \$10,200,000 in 2002 (an average increase of 25.99% per year).

For 11 years in a row, FORTUNE magazine recognized Southwest Airlines in its annual survey of corporate reputations, and among all industries in 2007, FORTUNE has listed Southwest Airlines as number five among America's Top Ten most admired corporations. Kelleher himself has received numerous awards and honors, including the U. S. Chamber Business Leadership Hall of Fame; CEO of the Year and one of history's top three CEOs, Chief Executive magazine; CEO of the Century, Texas Monthly magazine; National Sales and Marketing Hall of Fame; U. S. Master Entrepreneur, INC. magazine; CEO of the Decade-Airline Industry, Financial World magazine; Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy; Bower Award for Business Leadership, Franklin Institute; Smithsonian Aero Club Trophy; Tony Jannus Award; Wings Club Distinguished Achievement Award; San Diego Aerospace Hall of Fame; L. Welch Pogue Award for Lifetime Achievement in Aviation, Aviation Week; Airline Business Award, Airline Business magazine; 2005 Global Services Leader Award; History Making Texan Award; the Business Halls of Fame of the State of Texas, the University of Texas, Texas A&M, and the City of Dallas, the Herbert D. Kelleher Servant Leader Scholarship named in Herb's honor by the Austin Business Travel Association, induction into the Texas Labor Management Hall of Fame; and the Transportation Research Forum President's Award.

Kelleher graduated with honors from Wesleyan University, where he was an Olin Scholar.

SOURCE Southwest Airlines