

FRONTIERS OF FLIGHT MUSEUM



Contact:

Carla Meadows

carla@northstarpr.net; 214.676.5906

FRONTIERS OF FLIGHT RE-LAUNCHES “SPIRIT OF DALLAS CLUB” TO CELEBRATE CITY’S COMMITMENT TO AVIATION PAST AND PRESENT

Museum’s New CEO Cheryl Sutterfield-Jones Announces Plans to Rejuvenate Club from 1920’s in Honor of Historic Long-Distance Flight Competition to Help Put Dallas on the Aviation Map

DALLAS (Feb. 15, 2012) – Today, the **Frontiers of Flight Museum’s** newly appointed **President and CEO Cheryl Sutterfield-Jones** announced plans to re-launch the “**Spirit Dallas Club**” during a VIP reception to be held at the museum on Monday, Feb. 27. Sutterfield-Jones, a longtime leader in the north Texas non-profit community, was formerly CEO and President of the Dallas Area Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Once on board at the Frontiers of Flight Museum, Sutterfield-Jones was inspired by the concept of the Spirit of Dallas Club, which was originally created in 1927 by local business leaders for the purpose of putting Dallas on the nation’s aviation map. “Just like today, the business community recognized the positive economic impact of promoting the city of Dallas,” said Sutterfield-Jones.

During the Frontiers of Flight Museum’s upcoming VIP reception on Feb. 27, organizers will offer charter memberships to the newly revamped Spirit of Dallas Club as an innovative fundraising effort. “Memberships will offer participants an array of benefits and help ensure that the Frontiers of Flight Museum continues to be recognized as one of the nation’s leading air and space museums, as we expand our mission of educating, motivating and inspiring the next generation,” said Sutterfield-Jones. Spirit of Dallas Club memberships range from \$1,000 to \$50,000.

According to **Joe M. Dealey, Jr.**, native Dallasite and fourth generation member of the pioneer Texas newspaper family that founded the *Dallas Morning News* in 1885, the Spirit of Dallas Club is just as important today as it was in the 1920s. Dealey’s great-grandfather, George Bannerman Dealey, was also the first member of the Spirit of Dallas Club and the original membership roster bears his signature. “We’re reconstituting the ‘Spirit of Dallas Club’ to offer the community an opportunity to support the Frontiers of Flight Museum and celebrate Dallas’ can-do spirit of the past and present,” Dealey said.

During the 1920s, the goal of the Spirit of Dallas Club was to provide funding for a suitable aircraft with which local aviator and World War I Ace Captain Bill Erwin would represent Dallas

in various long-distance flying competitions in a **plane dubbed the *Dallas Spirit*** including the Dole Air Derby race between Oakland, California and Honolulu.

The whole world was captivated by Charles Lindbergh's thrilling non-stop flight from New York to Paris in May 1927, and soon other cash prizes were being offered for various long-distance flights which caught Erwin's attention, like the Dole Air Derby.

Pineapple magnate James Dole offered \$25,000 for first place and \$10,000 for second place in an air race from the mainland U.S. to Hawaii – a flight that had not yet been accomplished. Similarly, wanting to put his adopted hometown on the aviation map, Dallas entrepreneur **William E. Easterwood** offered an additional \$25,000 prize for the first flight from Dallas across the Pacific to Hong Kong.

Local well-known aviator and World War I ace **William P. ("Lone Star Bill") Erwin** decided that he would attempt to win both prizes by first flying the *Dallas Spirit* from Dallas to Oakland, CA to compete in the Dole race to Hawaii, then continuing to Hong Kong. To help secure funding for an airplane, he went to the *Dallas Morning News*, the newspaper for which Erwin's International Airways had done a promotional flight the previous year.

George Bannerman Dealey, the newspaper's publisher, was receptive to Erwin's proposal, and the "Spirit of Dallas Club" was formed to fund construction of a suitable aircraft. "Eventually, 16 prominent Dallas business leaders, many of whose names are still familiar today, became sponsors of the project including **Karl Hoblitzelle**, President of Interstate Theaters.

Sadly, Bill Erwin and his navigator, Alvin Eichwaldt, were lost over the Pacific on their attempted flight from Oakland to Honolulu. "The *Dallas Spirit* story however should not be a story of failure but of triumph," said Sutterfield-Jones. "The courageous life led and standards set by Bill Erwin can be an inspiration to us so that the legacy of the *Dallas Spirit* will encourage us to strive for the best for our community and the greater good of everyone in North Texas."

ABOUT THE FRONTIERS OF FLIGHT MUSEUM

The Frontiers of Flight Museum, a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate, is a gem in our community that attracts 100,000 visitors annually including 30,000 students. The Museum is a learning laboratory using aviation and space flight to encourage and promote student excellence in science, technology, engineering and math.

For information call: (214) 350-1651 or visit www.flightmuseum.com.

###