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Improving the Quality of Life Through Balance Between Nature and Technology

News release

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Burt Rutan and Other Aviation Legends Inspire Crowd at Lindbergh Foundation “Legends of the Sky” Event

MINNEAPOLIS, June 9, 2005 — Aviation enthusiasts filled the 45,000 square foot Golden Wings Museum at the Anoka County Airport on Friday, May 20, at the “Legends of the Sky: hangar party hosted by the Anoka-based Lindbergh Foundation. This benefit event was the first such occasion sponsored by the Foundation, but likely will not be the last. The Foundation’s first event in Minnesota in 20 years enabled 350 aviation fans and Foundation friends to gather to hear stories of history-making aircraft and their pilots and mingle among the vintage airplanes from the Golden Age of Aviation, and several of aviation’s living legends as well.

John and Martha King roamed the crowd before taking over the master of ceremonies duties during the program. Their witty and folksy style was warm and inviting, and they made aviators and landlubbers alike feel welcome as they told the Lindbergh Foundation’s message of technological and environmental balance. They explained the pilot’s unique view from the air, which is the basis upon which the Lindbergh Foundation was established. Legends in their own time, John and Martha have revolutionized the flight training industry and have taught nearly half of each year’s class of new private and instrument pilots in the United States. They are the first couple to both hold every category and class of FAA pilot and instructor certificates. And, Martha is the first and only woman to achieve this complete ratings sweep.

Erik Lindbergh, vice chairman of the Foundation and grandson of Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh was the host for the evening. Erik’s graciousness was tangible as he thanked everyone for attending and crowds of admirers surrounded him, many with stories of their own to tell. Erik Lindbergh re-created his grandfather’s 1927 New York-to-Paris flight in May 2002, in honor of the 75th anniversary of the transatlantic flight that changed the course of aviation forever.

Greg Herrick, one of the nation’s preeminent collectors of Golden Age aircraft and a recognized leader in the aviation community, told a hair-raising story about flying his Stinson 6000-B when it encountered serious mechanical problems. Upon making the turn to go back to the airport and land, his windscreen filled up with a large green object, which turned out to be the Fuji blimp! Luckily, some quick maneuvering avoided a crash that “could have rivaled the Hindenburg,” quipped Herrick. The Kings, who have often flown the Fuji blimp, assured the audience and Herrick, that they were not

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piloting the blimp on that particular day. Herrick then read a diary entry written by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, which described her first ride in an airplane with Charles Lindbergh as the pilot:

“A crowd around the hangars. The Ford plane shone – silver in the hot field – a group around it. We went over and stepped in. Mother, Aunt Alice, Elisabeth, Con and I (and Mr. Stout). It was like a train inside: wicker chairs, only slanted back at a terrific angle. The plane was nosed upwards.... Then he [Charles Lindbergh] came, across from the hangars.... He was striding along in his everyday suit and gray felt hat, hand in pocket, head forward a little He looked up quickly as he approached the plane and saw us and smiled, nodding. Then he stepped in, bending not to hit his head.... The engines whirred; easily, we started to roll – faster, faster. I did not look out – I was too excited, exalted, It all happened so quickly... Things whizzed past – trees, the hangars – I did not know when we left the ground. Con, Elisabeth, and I went forward to the front seats just back of the Colonel. Then we were happy – so terribly and ecstatically happy, alone and together and able to watch him. Suddenly I felt the real sensation of going up – a great lift, like a bird, like one’s dreams of flying – we soared in layers. That lift that took your breath away ... He was so perfectly at home – all his movements mechanical. He sat easily and quietly, not rigidly, but relaxed, yet alert.... We were pointed toward the mountains. We saw a lake like quicksilver; a hill like a mound. Oh, to go on and on – over mountains! I could understand why people never can give it up. ... I looked out at the wheels: they grazed the ground, and cloud of dust, but an imperceptible, balloon-like bounce It was a complete and intense experience. I will not be happy till it happens again.”¹

Pointing to his fully restored 1927 Ford Tri-motor, which was gleaming beautifully on the white painted floor behind the audience, Herrick said, “That same aircraft is with us here tonight behind you, and in so many ways Charles and Anne Lindbergh are with us as well.” Audible gasps could be heard from the audience. “Aviation, both literally and figuratively, brings people together,” said Herrick. “For Charles Lindbergh and Anne Morrow on that day it brought them together, and their experience continues through with us here this evening. Charles Lindbergh himself observed: ‘I owned the world that hour as I rode over it. Free of the earth, free of the mountains, free of the clouds, but how inseparably I was bound to them.’ His [Lindbergh’s] summary of the gift of flight and the appreciation of this beautiful earth is what this evening is all about.”²

Dr. Bertrand Piccard flew all the way from Switzerland to be a part of this event, and to accept the 2005 Lindbergh Award for significant achievements toward the balance between our technological advancements and the preservation of our environment at a separate event the following evening. An aviation pioneer and balloonist famous for his 1999 ‘round the world flight in a balloon, Dr. Piccard inspired the audience by talking about his profound metaphor for life. The revelation came during his 1999 balloon flight when he had lots of time to think. Dr. Piccard explained that during the trip he realized that life is like flying in a balloon. A person’s life flows with the wind, and if you want to change the direction of your life, you must change altitude. Dr. Piccard’s philosophy resonates very much with the Lindbergh Foundation’s message in that he believes society should go with the wind, and with nature, not against it.

Dr. Clayton Cowl, Chief of the Aviation and Aerospace Medical Section at the Mayo Clinic is a commercially rated balloon pilot and is considered a national expert on hot air balloon safety. He told of the extraordinary contributions Charles A. Lindbergh brought to aviation through the high

altitude testing he participated in at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., in 1942. Lindbergh spent two weeks at the Mayo Clinic conducting a series of experiments to test the effects of high altitudes on the body. “I think the people who did the type of shirt-sleeve research conducted by Charles Lindbergh were incredibly brave,” said Dr. Cowl.

Dr. Paul MacCready, Jr., was also present. A Lindbergh Foundation director and founder and chairman of AeroVironment, Inc., Dr. MacCready has been pioneering the use of alternate energy sources in aviation for over 50 years, developing vehicles and devices that strike a balance between nature and technology. He became known as the “father of human-powered flight,” when his *Gossamer Condor* made the first sustained, controlled flight by a heavier-than-air craft powered solely by its pilot’s muscles. His *Gossamer Albatross* was the first aircraft to fly across the English Channel using only human power, in 1979. Dr. MacCready also won the Kremer Prize for both his *Gossamer Condor* and *Gossamer Albatross*. While Dr. MacCready was not a speaker at this event, many aviation enthusiasts recognized him and relished the opportunity to speak with him.

Burt Rutan capped off the evening, keeping the audience in rapt attention as he outlined his historic mentors and the progress of aviation and space travel during the course of his lifetime. He concluded his talk by showing the takeoff and landing of *SpaceShipOne* on Oct. 4, 2004, and narrating for the audience specific details about the flight. “Burt gave one of the most moving and inspirational aviation speeches I’ve ever heard,” said Roger Gomoll. “Everyone was inspired by his intelligence and technological knowledge and ability, and were instantly won over by the grace and humility in which he sees his own efforts fitting into the history of aviation.” Following Rutan’s presentation, the audience erupted with applause and a standing ovation. “I was honored to be in the same room with three aviation pioneers who have achieved dreams and forwarded flight — human powered, powered by wind and lifted by helium, and piston, turbine, and rocket powered, to a level that has been only dreamed of since mankind first looked skyward,” said Gomoll.

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The [Lindbergh Foundation](#) is a public 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, based in Anoka, Minnesota, which strives to improve the long-term quality of all life by balancing technological advancements and the preservation of our environment. The Lindbergh Foundation also values individual initiative and accomplishments. Its programs are devoted to supporting, honoring, and educating individuals, through three major programs: the annual honorary Lindbergh Award, presented to individuals for significant contributions toward balance in their work; the Lindbergh Grants program, which provides grants in amounts up to \$10,580 (the cost of building the *Spirit of St. Louis* in 1927) for research or education projects that will make important contributions to the technology/environment balance; and a variety of educational events and publications centered on the balance theme.

¹ *Bring Me a Unicorn*, by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., New York, New York, 1971.

² *Lindbergh*, by Leonard Mosley, Doubleday, 1978