

March 2026
NEWSLETTER



OPEN WED-SAT 10-4

Museum

at 10 Richards Road

816-234-1011

TWAMUSEUM@GMAIL.COM

10 Richards Road

Kansas City, MO 64116

twamuseum.org

From the President, Matt Larsen

Fellow volunteers and Friends of the Museum,

For those of you whom I haven't met yet, my name is **Matt Larsen**. I started as a tour volunteer in March 2019 and have worked most Saturdays since then. I currently serve as President of the TWA Board of Directors, having been elected as president late last year. Prior to that, I was serving as vice president. I developed a love of aviation from my late maternal grandfather, who owned a flying service in central Maine. I have many fond memories of flying the right seat in his Cessna 172, although it wasn't until many years later that I could reach the rudder pedals. Also - ever since I was a kid - I always try to book a window seat because the thrill of flying has never left me.

My current job is work-from home and has allowed me to travel around the continental U.S., including a stop in **McMinville, Oregon** where I toured the **Evergreen Aviation Museum**. Most thrilling of all was my tour of **Howard Hughes'** famous '**Spruce Goose**' and getting to sit in his old seat!

I share the pride shown by TWA alumni in the airline that was so instrumental in commercial aviation for over 75 years. Their professionalism and can-do attitude are an inspiration to me and a clear indication of why the airline was as successful as it was.

I applaud the efforts of everyone who have worked so hard to bring about the return of the hangar dance (Saturday, April 25th), and look forward to making new friends and renewing old friendships!



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Matt Larsen, President
Judy Gerling, Executive VP
Jay Stewart, VP of Operations
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Dianna Bennett, Secretary
Jim Hall, Director
Janet Lhuillier, Director
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John Miller Sr., Director
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Judy Gerling

Newsletter

Nancy Sitzmann & John Mays

Operations Manager

John Mays

Social Media

Matt Larsen & Jay Stewart

Volunteer Coordinator

Shelley Tork Raker

Thank you Chris Funk!



The museum's longtime Treasurer, **Chris Funk**, has retired from our board of directors. Chris was appointed to our board in 2014. He has worked tirelessly for our organization, week-in and week-out, and his generosity - both monetarily and through in-kind donations from his company Picture & Frame Industries - has made a lasting impact. We will forever be grateful to Chris for his steadfast - and sometimes blunt assessments - of guiding our museum ship through the challenging financial waters. He was not only a great treasurer, but he is also a far greater man. We thank you, Chris!

The TWA Hostess Uniforms Live On!



The TWA museum models wearing TWA uniforms have been enjoying showing them off in support of the TWA Museum. In the past we took our uniform show all over the country and Europe. We even did two shows for **Jet Blue** (quite a few TWA staff went to work for them). Most recently we assisted our neighbor at the downtown airport, **Angel Flight Central**, at their annual fundraiser.

Almost all of our uniforms were designed by well-known couturier designers such as **Christian Dior, Oleg Cassini, Don Loper, Pierre Balmain, Valentino, Stan Herman, and Ralph Lauren**. Celebrities such as **Jackie Kennedy, Diana Princess of Wales, Audrey Hepburn, Julia Roberts, and Cate Blanchett** were dressed in these fabulous designer's clothes. Valentino recently passed away. He was an extremely successful Italian fashion designer whose style was described as "Jet-set." How perfect that title was for a TWA Flight Attendant Uniform. Valentino asked us for some of our uniforms as he had never kept any of them. He wanted to place them in his traveling museum benefitting children. We packed a trunk of Valentino's complete collection and took them to him in Rome. He was thrilled to receive them and gave us a signed drawing of one of the uniforms he designed for us.

We would love to show our uniforms and talk about the history of the world famous Trans World Airlines to more groups, so please keep us in mind for your next large or small event.

Submitted by Judy Gerling and Pam Blaschum

Welcome New Volunteer!

Since childhood, **Chris Lichti** has had an interest in all things that fly, especially airplanes. It probably had something to do with the crop dusters flying over his house in rural Nebraska every day in the summer. Chris earned his pilot certificates at **Hesston College** along with a Bachelor's degree in aviation. He now works for an organ transplant company, flying the Phenom 300. Chris first visited the TWA museum in June and realized it would be a great opportunity to volunteer in an aviation related setting, and signed-up to be a tour guide every other Friday. His favorite part of volunteering is explaining specifics and fun facts about various TWA airplanes and listening to firsthand stories from the volunteers who flew them.



In Memory of Raymond "Ray" Rowe

The **TWA Museum** recently lost a dear friend and Museum Guide.



Ray passed away peacefully on December 17, 2025, at the North Care Hospice House in NKC, MO. He served in the US Air Force as a pilot, followed by a 25-year career with Trans World Airlines, ending as captain flying on 727s.

After his retirement, he built a workshop where he created custom cabinets and furniture that graces the homes of many friends and family. Some were visible at Beth Haven Church, where his service was held.

He became as a volunteer at the **TWA Museum** in 2013 after the passing of his high school sweetheart and wife of 55 years. He volunteered 2 days a week, taking a multitude of visitors through the history of his beloved airline.



He was also an amazing cook and host. Most of us at the Museum were invited to his home for a family dinner with his children.

Pam Blaschum (retired TWA Board President) loved to watch him show visitors how the TWA pilot training boards worked and answer numerous questions from the guests.

Aside from his love of the Museum, he was a wonderful family man. When bidding his trips, he'd always ask his wife and children when they wanted him home so that he could miss as few baseball games, concerts, and other special days as possible.

We will be working on a new exhibit to honor Ray.

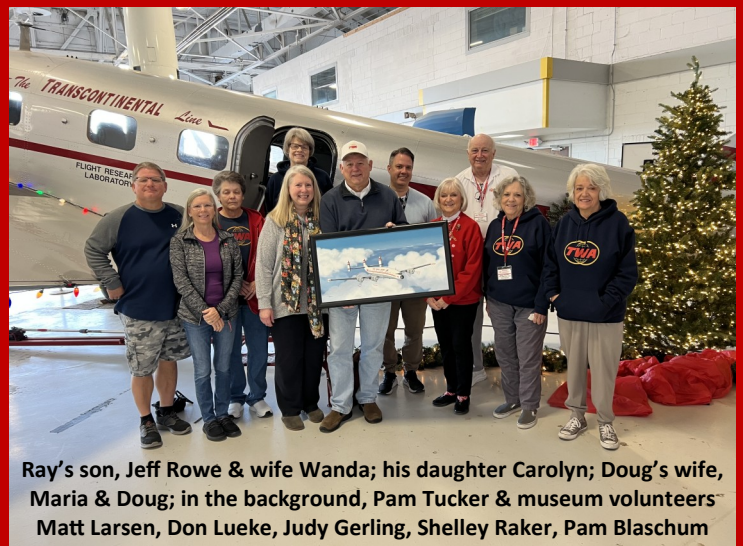
On December 26, 2025, Ray's son, Doug Rowe, presented the TWA Museum with his most recent painting of the Constellation. Ray had purchased his son's painting in order to donate it to the museum when everyone was home for Christmas. All of Ray's children were at the museum to donate many of Ray's items, including an original artwork painted by Doug, which is priceless!

Doug served in the Air Force for several years as a pilot. After his military service, he refined his art skills. He is now a combat artist for the Navy. Here is his website:

www.douglasrowestudios.com/



Ray's daughter, Pam Tucker; his son, Doug Rowe; and Pam Blaschum



Ray's son, Jeff Rowe & wife Wanda; his daughter Carolyn; Doug's wife, Maria & Doug; in the background, Pam Tucker & museum volunteers Matt Larsen, Don Lueke, Judy Gerling, Shelley Raker, Pam Blaschum

TWA SIGN PROJECT UPDATE

As many of you know from our July 2025 newsletter, our museum has been in possession of the TWA "letters" neon sign which appeared on the roof over the East Wing for many years. The letters are in rough shape, so our board of directors recently approved for **Premiere Outdoors** to rehab the sign. This work will begin in March. In addition, the FAA recently performed an obstruction evaluation regarding the letters/sign to be reinstalled on the roof of our historic building. The FAA has approved of our plan, and with the blessings of Signature Aviation (who manages the building), we will be moving on to the next steps in the process. It is our hope to begin construction of the sign platform this summer and have everything finished by this winter.

To date, the museum has raised \$31,000.00 in donations for the sign project; \$14,500.00 will be expended for the sign refurbishment. It is estimated that the rooftop install of the sign will cost approx. \$63,000.00. Thus, we will need to raise an additional \$47K or so to see the project to completion. Again, the goal is to have the sign installed and operational in time for the 100th anniversary of MKC. We want to make our airport proud!

As always, special thanks to Signature Aviation and the Kansas City Aviation Department for their ongoing support and assisting us with the specific aspects of this project.

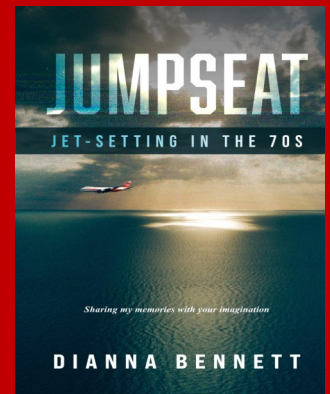
New in the Gift Shop!

TWA Museum Book Review

Jumpseat: Jet Setting in the 70's

by **Dianna Bennett (author)** - Reviewed by **John Mays**

I was provided a preview copy of "Jumpseat", knowing full-well that Dianna is a great face-to-face storyteller. Going into this read, I was hopeful that it was not another boring reflection on an airline career ripe of miserable travel stories - similar to being punished as a child and forced to watch your family's 35mm vacation slide presentations. Jumpseat is far more riveting than I could have ever imagined. As an avid reader, this is one of those rare books that held my attention from chapter to chapter. I was left wondering about more aspects of Dianna's flying career, and of all those fleeting characters who made her life such a fascinating read. You will not be disappointed. I simply can't wait to read the follow-up chapters of Dianna's life! Available now in the museum's gift shop for only \$15.00.



Time of Departure: A Time Travel Story

A Novel by **Edward Carr**

After an inflight emergency, Trans World Airlines Captain Tom Reynolds lands his Lockheed TriStar widebody jumbo jet at an unfamiliar airport where the runway is barely long enough, the only terminal is a two-story brick building and where the ground personnel insist, they have arrived at their intended destination of St. Louis Lambert Airport.



But the crew and passengers are shocked to learn it is 1947, and with no obvious means of returning to their time, they must blend into a society they've only known as history. Now Captain Reynolds and his crew must find a way back before aviation mogul Howard Hughes takes the airplane apart for its futuristic technology, leaving them stranded in the past forever. Available now in the museum's gift shop for only \$20.00.

Email us at twajohnmays@gmail.com to purchase your copies today!

Have you purchased from the gift shop lately???

Penelope Smith worked as a hostess for **Trans World Airlines** from 1959 to 1961. "Penny" loved the idea of travel so much that she bent her body over to qualify for the height restrictions when she applied for the job. She flew with the crews of the Constellation (or "Connie") and the Boeing 707 and enjoyed every interaction with her passengers. In 1961, while awaiting an all-night flight, Penny met Captain Russ Lundstrom in the crew room at Midway Airport, and nine months later she became Penny Smith Lundstrom!



Russ flew for TWA from 1956 to 1974, piloting the Martin 404, the Connie, and the Convair 880 jet before retiring on a medical leave. Together, they raised four children who all adopted the travel bug and are proud TWA alumni legacies. Russ died January 9, 1985. Penny worked for Maritz Travel for 21 years and is now retired, living in Tucson, Arizona and enjoying being a grandma to nine, and a great grandma to her beautiful six great grandchildren, ages five years to eight months.



Pictured left is **Juri and Nancy Tolmoff**. Juri was a TWA 707 F/O and a 767 Captain, NY Domicile 1966-1997.

Send us a picture of yourself with something you've purchased in our gift shop and we'll include it in the next newsletter! Please email nlsitzmann7@gmail.com.

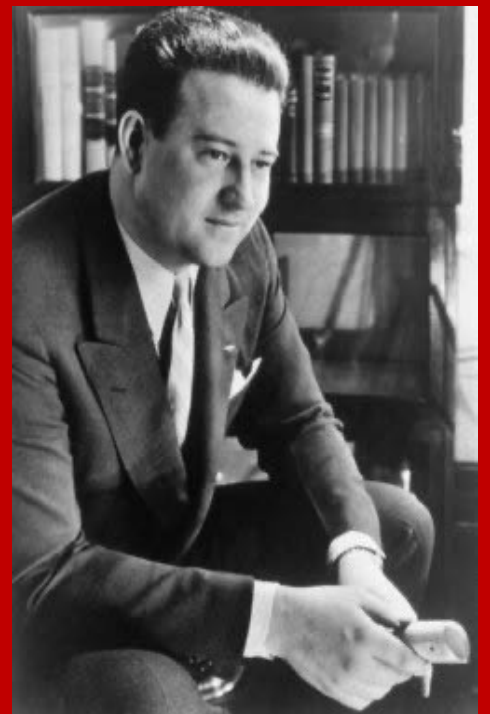
Remembering Jack Frye . . .

On February 3, 1959 - Jack Frye was killed by a drunk driver in an auto accident in Tucson, Arizona. He catapulted TWA into the legacy airline it is known for and made a number of key contributions to commercial aviation:

- Initiated Douglas Aircraft to engineer and manufacture the DC1/DC2/DC3 (C-47).
- Was instrumental in developing the "over-the-weather" flying concept in the 1930s and 1940s (Boeing 307).
- Was key to getting his friend Howard Hughes to become principal shareholder of TWA in 1939, away from Lehman Brothers and investor John D. Hertz.

Sadly, the very day he passed was the same day of the tragic plane crash that killed Buddy Holly, "The Big Bopper" and Richie Valens.

Jack was a true pioneer who deserves more recognition for his epic contributions!



Moonliner II Dedication Ceremony Draws Enthusiastic Crowd

Submitted by Jay Stewart

Following the momentous relocation of the Moonliner II to the TWA Museum in September 2025, a formal dedication ceremony took place in Hangar 1 on November 1, 2025 to celebrate this milestone.

During the program, the Moonliner II owner, Dan Viets, delivered a fascinating presentation, offering behind-the-scenes insights into the Moonliner II's remarkable journey and the effort involved in bringing it to its new home at the TWA Museum.

The event welcomed approximately 50 attendees, reflecting strong community interest in this iconic piece of Disney history; Special guests included Walt Disney's nephews, Charles and Daniel Disney, who graciously mingled with visitors, autographed Moonliner posters, and posed for photos alongside Dan Viets.



The Courage of Uli Derickson: A Tale from TWA Flight 847

Submitted by Jay Stewart and Pam Blaschum



On June 14, 1985, a routine flight from Athens to Rome turned into a harrowing ordeal for passengers and crew aboard TWA Flight 847. As the plane soared through the skies, it was hijacked by members of Hezbollah, plunging everyone on board into a nightmare that would last for two grueling days. Amidst this chaos stood **Uli Derickson**, a flight attendant whose bravery and compassion became beacons of hope in an otherwise dark situation.

Uli's story is not just one of survival; it's about human resilience in the face of terror. When armed men stormed through their aircraft demanding control, panic ensued. Yet amidst screams and uncertainty, Uli remained composed — her instincts kicking in as she worked tirelessly to reassure frightened passengers while trying to negotiate with their captors.

At a crucial point when the plane needed fuel, the ground crew refused to provide any without upfront payment, even when the hijackers threatened to kill the hostages on the plane. At that point, Uli Derickson offered her Shell credit card, which was charged about \$5,500 for 6,000 gallons of jet fuel. She also collected passports and concealed those who belonged to Jewish-sounding names.

What made her stand out wasn't merely her courage but also her unwavering commitment to humanity. She took risks that many wouldn't dare consider — offering comfort where fear reigned supreme. Her actions helped save all but one passenger during those tense moments when lives hung precariously in the balance.

Her story transcends mere statistics or headlines; it invites us to reflect on what true heroism looks like — not just acts defined by grand gestures but rather quiet determination paired with empathy at critical junctures.

A made-for-television drama film was produced in 1988 starring Lindsay Wagner. Uli Derickson herself served as a consultant for the film. ***The Taking of Flight 847: The Uli Derickson Story*** – Movie available for free on Tubi.



Four of the cabin crew members of hijacked Flight 847 are pictured at London en route back to the U.S. following their release at Algiers. From left are flight attendants Judy Cox, Hazel Heap and Elizabeth Howes and purser Uli Derickson. One passenger, Ann Summers, writing in "USA Today" on June 19, said Uli Derickson "saved our lives." Miss Summers, who had been vacationing in Europe, is an employee of the newspaper.

AP/Wide World Photo

Thinking of Donating Items to the Museum?

Before sending or dropping off items to the museum, please send an email to: twajohnmays@gmail.com describing your donation, list of items and pictures if possible.

We will respond as soon as we can!
We truly appreciate the donations we receive but are running out of storage room.

Thank you for your consideration!



Want to Book a Tour of 10 Guests or More?

Simply follow this link to book your tour online:

<https://twamuseum.org/group-tours>

All group admission prices require a minimum of **10 guests** paying in one transaction.

Reservations are required. Please book **72 hours** before your visit date.

Group Admission Fees:

Adults and Seniors, 10 guests or more – \$10.00 each.

Youths pay usual rates, regardless of number in the group.

Youth (ages 6-16) – \$8.00
Children (ages 1-5) – FREE

The TWA Museum is pleased to announce our newly elected/appointed officers and members to the organization’s board of directors:

Matt Larsen, President

Appointed 2024/Elected 2025/Term Expires 2027

Judy Gerling, Executive Vice President

Appointed 2020/Elected 2025/Term Expires 2026

Jay Stewart, Vice President of Operations

Appointed 2025/Elected 2025/Term Expires 2026

David Parker, Treasurer

Appointed in 2025/Term Expires 2026

Dianna Bennett, Secretary

Appointed in 2025/Term Expires 2027

Jim Hall, Director

Appointed 2025/Elected 2025/Term Expires 2026

Janet Lhuillier, Director

Appointed 2025/Elected 2025/Term Expires 2027

Donald Lueke, Director

Appointed 2023/Elected 2025/Term Expires 2026

John Miller, Sr., Director

Appointed 2023/Elected 2025/Term Expires 2026

Alice Wasko, Director

Appointed 2016/Elected 2025/Term Expires 2027

Ken Weiner, Director

Appointed in 2026/Term Expires 2026

Pam Blaschum continues to serve our organization as **Past President Advisor**

Photos and bios may be found here:

<https://twamuseum.org/meet-our-board>

The board of directors functions as the backbone of our organization by providing essential governance, strategic direction, and fiduciary oversight. Their time and commitment to serving our great museum should never be taken for granted.

Mission Statement

The mission of the TWA Museum is “to preserve and celebrate the extraordinary legacy of Trans World Airlines (TWA), educate visitors about its pioneering spirit and contributions to aviation history, and to inspire future generations”.

TWA Museum Hangar Dance

Sponsored by Signature Aviation



Where: **Signature Aviation Hangar**
10 NW Richards Road, Kansas City, MO
When: **Saturday, April 25, 2026**
Check-In: **5:30-7:00** / Dance Begins: **7:00**

Music provided by **Walter Bryant on Keyboard, Rod Fleeman on Guitar, Kent Rausch on Drums.** Featuring the vocalists **Adriane Hall-Csikos and Rudy Amato.** Dance performances by **TWA Captain Russ Longley and Janice Coley; Mark Harris and partner; and the Swingsters.**

OTHER INFORMATION:

Vintage WWII and other military uniforms, vintage 40's attire and TWA uniforms welcomed or come as you are!!!

Cash Bar (credit cards accepted)

No outside alcohol/beverages are allowed
Bring a picnic dinner/appetizers for your group!

\$45.00 per person before April 17th

Or purchase a table for 10 guests for \$450.00

(Tables seat 4 or 10)

\$50.00 per person at the door!

Ticket Reservations - Two Ways to Pay!

Credit Card: Follow the link below or scan the QR code to reserve tickets!

twamuseum.org/hangar-dance-reservations

Check: Fill out the form below, attach your payment and we will confirm your reservation via e-mail or by phone.

Please include the names of attendees on the back of this form

Name: _____ Phone#: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Mail or drop off this form with payment (please make checks payable to the TWA Museum) to:
TWA Museum, Attn: Nancy Sitzmann, 10 NW Richards Road, Suite 110, Kansas City, MO 64116

Need Help?

Call the TWA Museum at 816-234-1011 for more information or email:
Nancy Sitzmann at nlsitzmann7@gmail.com / John Mays at twajohnmays@gmail.com



THANK YOU!

The TWA Museum would like to thank the following businesses for their support in so many ways!



IWERX for allowing us use of their space for events and their continuing support!



Community America for their history and partnership in the future with the TWA Museum!



Silver Wings International for their generous and consistent donations they make to the TWA Museum!



Clipped Wings International for their generous donation of \$49,000 to the TWA Museum and their wonderful in-person support at special events!



Signature Aviation for their continued support in all our endeavors!



Thank you to our Caterer Emily McMurray of **"Gourmet-ish"**, for helping us with the many events that we host!

Also, thank you to our wonderful TWA former employees, Friends of the Museum, and all those who have donated items and money to make sure we preserve the history of TWA here in Kansas City, as well as the world.



Museum Legacy Society

The TWA Museum Legacy Society has been established to provide you the opportunity to commit a gift during your lifetime that will help preserve the TWA Museum for years to come!

Dying is not something we want to think about. However, if we want to have a say in what happens after our passing, we need to make sure our wishes are known ahead of time. If in lieu of flowers you would like memorial donations made to the TWA Museum in your memory or the memory of a loved one, make sure that your loved ones are told of your wishes or if you would like to leave part of your estate to the museum, make sure it is put in your will or trust to that effect.

All of the memorial donations are tax deductible as the Museum is a 501C3 nonprofit.

Need to Conduct Some Research?

The museum offers several links and resources in which to perform research. The museum's archives website and digital collection is a great place to start. Most of the information that you seek may be found by searching through the resources offered here:

<https://twamuseum.org/research>

<http://www.twamuseumarchives.org/>

MAKE YOUR PROM OR ENGAGEMENT A SPECIAL MEMORY AT THE TWA MUSEUM



We have had several requests for **Prom and Engagement Pictures** to be taken with **Ellie**, in our **vintage phone booths** or in the **Ambassador Club**. Now we can include our **Cabin Trainer!** We love to get our pictures out there and welcome the opportunity for those special moments in time.

A \$25.00 donation is suggested for personal phone photos and a \$50.00 donation for professional photographers. Reservations are recommended so we can secure the volunteers we need to help with this one of a kind opportunity. Call the Museum at **816-234-1011** to make your reservation!



TWA Museum Hours

Wednesday - Saturday / 10 AM to 4 PM

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Zana Allen | Nancy Sitzmann |
| Joe Ballweg | Jay Stewart |
| Jerry Bauers | Mark Townsend |
| Dianna Bennett | Pam Tucker |
| Pam Blaschum | Alice Wasko |
| Martin Bryant | Ken Weiner |
| Margo Cabillonar | Kris Walstad |
| Larry Chalberg, Sr. | Sonia Whiteaker |
| Dennis Claus | |
| Kevin Clossick | |
| Sandra Clouser | |
| Jawn Collins | |
| Jim Davis | |
| Dwight Donald | |
| Linda Eckerle | |
| Robert Eckerle | |
| Chris Elkins | |
| Margie Foley | |
| Jim Hall | |
| Pam Henderson | |
| Judy Gerling | |
| Kathy Grant | |
| Judy Guilford | |
| Belinda Hobbs | |
| Joe Hobbs | |
| Rick Karsten | |
| Debi Knechtenhofer | |
| Matt Larsen | |
| Chris Lichti | |
| Janet Lhuillier | |
| Don Lueke | |
| Art Lujin | |
| Seth Mason | |
| Gary Mayden | |
| Conner McCollim | |
| John Miller | |
| Bill (Mitch) Mitchell | |
| Lori Moore | |
| David Morningstar | |
| Elli & Eric Morse | |
| Mark Murtha | |
| Nina Newberry | |
| David Parker | |
| Shelley Tork Raker | |
| Ray Rowe | |
| Frank Ruege, Jr. | |
| David Schrag | |
| Lane Sisson | |
| Bryan Sitzmann | |

TWA Museum Volunteers

TWA Museum Volunteers

TWA Museum Volunteers



TWA Museum
10 NW Richards Rd
Kansas City, MO 64116-4253

Donation Form



Friend of the Museum

Your support ensures that the Legacy of TWA and its influence on early aviation remains intact within future generations, and for that WE THANK YOU!

If you would like to make a donation through this newsletter, please fill out the following form and mail it to the volunteers at:

TWA Museum
10 Richards Road, Suite 110
Kansas City, Missouri 64116

Individual - \$45.00

Benefits: Member card, unlimited free museum admission 1 year, a 10% discount in the gift shop and online sales, and advance notice to special events and exhibits.

(Senior \$35.00)

Benefits: Member card, unlimited free museum admission for family members 1 year, a 10% discount in the gift shop and online sales, and advance notice to special events and exhibits.

(Senior \$65.00)

Founders Club-\$2,500.00

Benefits: Member card, free family entry life of donor, 20% discount on all merchandise, newsletter, advance notice of special events and exhibits, PERMANENT RECOGNITION on beautiful plaque displayed in the TWA Museum.

Amount Enclosed:

_____\$250 ____\$500 ____\$750 ____\$1000 ____Other _____

Phone Number: _____

Address _____

Name _____