

BRANIFF BUILDING OKC TOUR AND THIRD BRANIFF TRAIL PLAQUE DEDICATION HELD THIS PAST SATURDAY

The Braniff Building/Skirvin Hotel Tour was held this past Saturday, April 8, 2017, and it was met with accolades for all of the 60-plus tour guests. This was one of the BEST tours that Braniff Airways Foundation has ever conducted and it remained on schedule throughout the entire day. The tour began promptly at 10AM with registration followed by a review of the impressive and colorful tour boards, which covered all of Braniff's four headquarters buildings in both Oklahoma City and Dallas.

Signed copies of The NEW Braniff Book, Braniff Airways: Flying Colors, by Braniff Airways Foundation Founder and President Richard Ben Cass were also available for purchase during the board review. Once this segment was completed, the tour guests were escorted to the second-floor conference room, which had been setup with individual tables of six and our gracious hosts, legal representatives and main tenant of the Braniff Building, Crowe & Dunlevy Attorneys and Counselors at Law, also provided a cooler full of delicious drinks.

Crowe & Dunlevy's Director of Marketing and Business Development, Ms. Brooke Haneborg, welcomed everyone to the Braniff Building and introduced hosts Mr. Roger a Stong, a Crowe & Dunlevy attorney and past president and Crowe & Dunlevy President Timila S. Rother. Ms. Haneborg introduced Mr. Cass who introduced Mr. Bob Blackburn, Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society, who spoke about the economic factors that led to entrepreneurs such as Tom and Paul Braniff to decide to locate their businesses in Oklahoma City.

Mr. Blackburn was followed by Mike S. Braniff, the grandson of Braniff Airways cofounder Paul Revere Braniff. He spoke about his grandfather and also presented an unpublished manuscript that his grandfather had written in 1952 about the early days of the formation and operation of the Braniff airline entities. The Foundation is currently in the process of finding a publisher for this manuscript but it appears that the Foundation may self-publish this historical document because the publishers are requiring a guarantee of revenue.

The highlight of the day was the introduction of the seventeen descendants of Tom and Paul Braniff. The Braniff family was the Foundation's special guests and some had flown from different parts of the country to attend the tour. The family was very warm and congenial and everyone at the tour was very thankful that they took part in the tour. The Foundation will ensure that all of the family members are invited to future events. Mike Braniff will fly back to Dallas on April 22, 2017, specifically to attend the DFW Airline Collectible Show event, which will feature the famed Pop-Up Braniff Boutique, where he has graciously agreed to greet show guests that visit the Boutique's booths.

Foundation Founding Board Member Collin Ice created a unique video for the tour participants to view that featured a grouping of Braniff's best TV commercials while the history of airline was covered in a 1969 company produced film dubbed End of the Plain Plain. After the film, Mr. Cass dedicated the third Braniff Trail Historical Plaque, which marked the importance of the Braniff Building to the history and legacy of Braniff Airways. A striking aluminum 12"x12" and 1/4-inch-thick plaque was presented to Crowe & Dunlevy. Mr. Cass read the engraving on the plaque to the guests and then presented it to Crowe & Dunlevy. The plaque will be placed at the 324 North Robinson entrance to the Braniff Building in May 2017

After the plaque dedication, guests were escorted to the elevators for the trip to the seventh floor where they toured the floor where Braniff Airways administrative offices were located until 1941/1942, when they were moved to the Red Brick Building Headquarters at Dallas Love Field. While the building has been completely remodeled on the inside, the original marble, brass and steel staircases, which provide access to each floor before elevators were installed in the 1960s, were restored to their original beauty.

The Crowe & Dunlevy attorneys opened their offices to the tour guests that displayed their impressive personal decorating abilities. One of the offices included a theme of the attorney's favorite sports team complete with a well-stocked celebratory bar cabinet. After the seventh-floor tour, everyone proceeded to the elevators and back to the lobby to review the tour boards. The group was released for lunch to either Kitchen 324, the Braniff Building's first tenant after it reopened in 2014, located on the bottom floor or the Park Avenue Grill at the Skirvin Hotel, which was across SandRidge Energy Plaza from the Braniff Building.

Braniff Airways Foundation Board Member Jack Witherspoon, Braniff's former Director of Advertising, was in attendance for the tour along with University of Texas Archives Curator Dr. Thomas Allen, who helped earlier in the morning with guest registration. Mr. Witherspoon drove up with former Braniff employees Rudy and Marilyn Bowling early that morning while Mr. Ice and Mr. Cass and Founding Foundation Board Member Gus Blouir arrived on Friday evening and stayed at the Skirvin Hotel. The hotel provided the Foundation administrators with huge two room luxury suites at no additional charge, which was greatly appreciated.

All of the Braniff family and the majority of the tour guests dined at the Park Avenue Grill and after a two hour break the group met in the lobby of the hotel for a tour of the majestic Skirvin Hotel that was also designed by Oklahoma City architect Solomon Andrew Layton. Layton had designed over 100 buildings in downtown Oklahoma City during the first half of the 20th Century and a record-breaking 22 of those buildings, including the Skirvin and Braniff buildings, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Once again, Bob Blackburn took the group on an amazing tour of the remarkable 200-room luxury hotel, which was fully booked on the Friday evening before the tour. The first stop was the multi-room and lavishly decorated Presidential Suite on the 11th floor, which was followed by a two-room suite and standard room on the seventh floor. The next stop was the 14th or top floor to view the spectacular Venetian and Continental Rooms, which were elegant dining and entertaining spaces that had been restored to their original beauty.

After admiring the breathtaking views of Oklahoma City and listening to the sound of wind hitting the side of the building on the top floor, the guests traveled back to the lobby where Mr. Blackburn discussed the history of the Skirvin. To close the tour, the group walked outside to the front of the building where Mr. Blackburn discussed the construction of the building and pointed out its additions through its 116-year history.

The building tours ended promptly at 3PM, which was remarkably on schedule. The group was then directed to proceed to the Oklahoma History Center to view the Braniff exhibits that included a special mockup of the Braniff Stinson-Detroiter aircraft registered as NC1829 that made the Airline's first flight from Oklahoma City to Tulsa, on June 20, 1928. The mockup is highly realistic with seat vibrators that gave the impression that the passenger was moving in relation to the film that was presented on screens outside of the

cabin windows. Captain Paul Revere Braniff, played by an actor, was on board to take the guests on Braniff's first flight.

Mr. Braniff flew over Oklahoma City and pointed out the various historical buildings and then proceeded to Tulsa, where he also pointed out the highlights of the Northeastern Oklahoma City. The tour concluded at 5PM at the Oklahoma History Center.

Braniff Airways Foundation

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