

TENTH BRANIFF TRAIL PLAQUE DEDICATED - On Saturday, November 4, 2017, Braniff Airways Foundation dedicated the tenth Braniff Trail Historical Plaque in Houston, Texas. The plaque was placed at the magnificent 1940 Air Terminal Museum located on the west side of Houston Hobby Airport in the southeast part of Houston, Texas. Plaque number ten marks Braniff's long history of serving the Houston area, including the Dallas-based carrier's first service to Latin America in 1948.

Braniff Airways first began serving Houston, Texas, on January 1, 1935, as a result of its merger with Dallas-based Long and Harman Airlines. Long and Harman had inaugurated service at Houston in November 1934. Braniff was the surviving carrier of the merger and the new routes it acquired extended the Airline's route map from Amarillo to Houston and Galveston, Texas, and from Dallas Love Field to Brownsville, Texas, via Austin and San Antonio, Texas. Long and Harman Airlines had been granted Air Mail Route 15, which was now operated with Braniff's Air Mail Route 9 from Oklahoma City to Chicago.

However, the most significant role Houston and its stylish art-deco styled 1940 Air Terminal played in the development of Braniff Airways was to act as the Airline's first international gateway city. On May 22, 1946, the Civil Aeronautics Board awarded Braniff a new 7719-mile route system that extended from the US Mainland to Central and Latin America and interior Mexico. The first Braniff flights initially served the US Mainland from Houston to Havana, Cuba, Panama City/Balboa City, and Guayaquil, Ecuador. Service to Lima, Peru, from Guayaquil was commenced on June 18, 1948. Additional routes from the original CAB award were inaugurated throughout Braniff's burgeoning Latin America system through 1951.

On June 4, 1948, a Braniff Douglas DC-6 four-engine airliner departed Houston, Texas, for the first time and headed southeast towards Havana, Cuba. This marked the first international service for Braniff Airways. Braniff continued to increase service at Houston both domestically and to its international destinations over the next three decades, which made the city one of the most important hubs to Braniff besides its key Dallas/Ft. Worth base of operations.

Braniff Airways Foundation Founder and President Ben Cass, contacted the 1940 Houston Air Terminal Museum on January 6, 2017, about the possibility of adding the famed museum terminal to the Braniff Trail Historical Plaque Project. Braniff Trail is designed to ensure that the history and legacy of Braniff Airways is marked at key locations throughout Braniff's route map that played critical roles in the development of the airline over its five decades of service. The special project is one of the central parts of the celebration of Braniff's 90th Anniversary throughout 2018.

The Foundation has enjoyed a rewarding relationship with the 1940 Air Terminal Museum for the last several years. In September 2014, a large group of museum staff traveled to Dallas to attend the first Braniff History and Architecture Conference. It was determined that the museum was the perfect place for the Houston Braniff Trail plaque rather than the current Houston Hobby Terminal Building. The museum was very happy about our selection for the Houston plaque and the process began for its placement. Once the museum's board approved the initial request in mid-February 2017, the Foundation created sample text of what it felt should be emphasized on the plaque.

Two possible versions of text was submitted to the Museum Director and both were approved. Ultimately, the text that emphasized Braniff service from Houston to Latin America was chosen by the Foundation. A series of Braniff Trail plaques were already scheduled for placement throughout the spring and summer of 2017. In July 2017, it was decided to travel to Houston to attend the annual Houston Airline Collectible Show, which would be held at the 1940 Air Terminal Museum, and present the plaque during that event on November 4, 2017. It was also decided to take part in the Airline Collectible Show by setting up the Foundation's highly popular Pop-Up Braniff Boutique.

The plans were submitted to the museum and approved on August 1, 2017. During September and October, a plan was created to ensure that all of the items needed for the event could be loaded into the Foundation's donated Ford Expedition EL for the trip to Houston. Hotel reservations were made at a hotel near the airport and conveniently adjacent to the 1940 Air Terminal Museum.

A new set of see-thru stacking containers were purchased to house all of the Boutique's products during the trip to Houston. Four tables were reserved for the Pop-Up Boutique at the Airline Collectible Show for product display.

During the summer of 2017, the Foundation's expert graphic artist created a concept plaque with the chosen text. This was presented to museum officials and was approved for engraving. On October 13, 2017, the concept plaque artwork was submitted to the engraver. Several changes were made to ensure that the text language was correct along with spelling and punctuation. Seven days later, on October 20, the engraver sent the final proof to the Foundation and it was approved for engraving. The plaque was received at the Foundation's headquarters in Dallas, at the end of October, in time for the placement ceremony in Houston.

The Foundation volunteers drove to Houston on Friday, November 2, 2017, to ensure that they would be in place on Saturday morning for the beginning of the Airline Collectible Show. The volunteers arrived at 1940 Air Terminal Museum at 7AM and began setting up the Pop-Up Boutique in time for the 9AM opening to the public. Museum and Foundation officials jointly looked over the former Braniff Airways offices located off of the main terminal lobby that houses the museum's Braniff, Continental and Texas International collections.

It was decided that the best location for the plaque was in the Braniff Uniform Gallery, which was located in the first office behind the Braniff ticket counters. A wooden stanchion was created by United Airlines mechanics to hold the plaque in place on the wall while the glue and expansion tape dried and took hold, respectively. At 2PM, the tenth Braniff Trail Historical Plaque was mounted on the wall of the former Braniff administration office with Mr. Cass and the museum's director posing for photos while holding the plaque in place.

As soon as the placement photos were completed, the special stanchion was placed below the heavy 1/4 inch thick stainless steel plaque measuring 12"x12" to ensure that it did not move until the adhesion process was completed. The Airline Collectible Show and Braniff Trail plaque placement were the first

events held at the museum since the end of August 2017, when the museum was stuck by Hurricane Harvey on August 31, 2017. The museum sustained significant roof damage, which allowed water to flow from the top floors down to the lobby area. The water damage was repaired during September and October in time for the Airline Show and plaque placement, while the remainder of the damage was repaired during November and December 2017.

Braniff Airways Foundation thanks our great friends at the 1940 Houston Air Terminal Museum for their hospitality and kindness during the plaque placement process. The Foundation is very honored to have had the opportunity to place a Braniff Trail Plaque at Houston's premier aviation museum.

Braniff Airways Foundation
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