

Guide to the
Southwest Airlines Public Relations Collection
(1973 - ????)

1.4 linear feet

Accession Number: 99-05
Collection Number: HAC99-05

Collection Dates: 1971 – 2004
Bulk Dates: 1973 - 1998

Prepared by

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Special Collections Department
McDermott Library, The University of Texas at Dallas

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Biographical Sketch:

Southwest Airlines began in 1966 when Rollin W. King sketched the plan for an airline flying short haul service between Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio on the back of a cocktail napkin and showed it to his friend Herb Kelleher. The two men incorporated Air Southwest and immediately faced numerous financial and legal challenges designed to keep Air Southwest from getting off the ground. In 1971, having renamed their airline Southwest, they began operation with three aircraft operating out of Love Field in Dallas, Texas. In order to compete in the crowded market Southwest created an image for itself as the "Love Airline" by calling its peanuts "lovebites", having stewardesses in hot pants, and referring to its ticket registers as "love machines".

In 1973 Southwest applied for the right to fly routes and into the Rio Grande Valley and in 1975 these routes were approved using Harlingen Airport as Southwest base. Additional Texas cities were added as destination in 1976. Southwest continued to face pressure tactics from established airlines (especially Braniff and Texas International). The most famous of these resulted in the "\$13 fare war" which saw Southwest launch a promotion where they offered free alcohol to travelers who played the full rate.

Southwest's greatest legal challenge came from an attempt by the still growing DFW Airport to drive Southwest from its base at Love Field. This led to a series of legal and civil challenges that were resolved in DFW's favor by the passage of the Wright Amendment of 1979. This congressional act prevented Southwest from advertising direct fares or operating direct service to all destinations but Texas cities and four surrounding states. In 1997, the Shelby Amendment added Alabama, Kansas, and Mississippi to the states that could be serviced directly from Love Field.

Despite the conditions imposed by the Wright Amendment Southwest continued to add destinations outside of Texas, starting with New Orleans in 1979. Southwest continued to grow and remain profitable throughout the 1980's and 1990's adding airport destinations that stretched from coast to coast. Southwest continued to focus on its market niche by billing itself as a no-frills airline with quick on the ground turn arounds, frequent flights, and standardization of aircraft (Boeing 737's). Southwest continued growing and managed to turn a profit even after the general economic downturn that occurred after the events of September 11, 2001. Southwest and its operations are currently profiled on the series *Airline*, airing on the Arts and Entertainment network. In 2004, Southwest launched a campaign to overturn the Wright Amendment called "Set Love Free."

Sources

The Southwest Airlines Public Relations Collection, Box 1 Folder 14, History of Aviation Collection, Special Collections Department, McDermott Library, The University of Texas at Dallas.

Southwest Airlines Official History.
(http://www.southwest.com/about_swa/airborne.html)

Series Description

The Southwest Airlines Public Relations Collection consists of one series comprised of two boxes of material totaling 1.4 linear feet. It is comprised of loose material in folders. The collection is described at the folder level. See container list for the title of individual folders.

Scope and Content Note

The Southwest Airlines Public Relations Collection includes public relations material used by Southwest Airlines. Present in the collection are schedules, photographs, employee newsletters, and a book commemorating the 25th anniversary of Southwest Airlines

Provenance Statement

The Southwest Airlines Public Relations Collection was donated to the History of Aviation Collection, McDermott Library Special Collections by Linda Rutherford on August 24, 2005.

Literary Rights Statement

Permission to publish, copy, reprint, digitize, orally record for transmission over public airways, or use in any and all current or future developed methods or procedures, must be obtained in writing from the Special Collections Department, McDermott Library, The University of Texas at Dallas.

Container list

Begins on page 5.

The Southwest Airlines Public Relations Collection: Container List

Box 1 **Titles, Dates, and Description**

Folder

- 1 Southwest Airlines Annual Report – Photocopy (1971)
- 2 Southwest Airlines Annual Report – Photocopy (1972)
- 3 Southwest Airlines Stock Offering Prospectus (June 8, 1972)
- 4 Southwest Airlines Stock Offering Prospectus (September 30, 1976)
- 5 *Heartbeats* (Fall, 1983)
- 6 *Love Notes* – Christmas Newsletter (n.d.)
- 7 *Luvlines* (October – November, 1976)
- 8 *Luvlines* (August, 1985)
- 9 *Luvlines* (October, 1996)
- 10 *Luvlines* (October, 2001)
- 11 *Luvlines* (July, 2004)
- 12 Southwest Airlines Folder (n.d.)
- 13 Southwest Airlines Press Kit (1973)
- 14 Southwest Airlines 25th Anniversary Booklet (1996)
- 15 Southwest Airlines Quick Reference Schedule (1972 – 1975, 1977)
- 16 Southwest Airlines Schedules (1980 – 1982)
- 17 Southwest Airlines Schedules (1983 – 1988)
- 18 Southwest Airlines Schedules (1990, 1992, 1994)
- 19 Southwest Airlines Schedules (1995 – 1996)
- 20 Southwest Airlines Schedules (1997 – 1999, 2002 – 2003)

The Southwest Airlines Public Relations Collection: Container List

Box 2 Titles, Dates, and Description

Folder

- 1 Photographs (1973 – 1994)
- 2 Framed Painting of Southwest Aircraft (n.d)