

Leader Summer 2017

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Love Field Landmark Reflect Family's Dedication to Dallas

Over the decades, trees grew and obscured Charles Umlauf's Spirit of Flight sculpture at Love Field. It languished behind construction barricades as the airport underwent a major modernization starting in 2007.

Now, Spirit of Flight has regained its prominence. Thanks to Leo Corrigan Sr.'s grandchildren and the airport modernization project, the sculpture was moved to a more visible location and is surrounded by a real park, rather than a parking lot. Its base and fountains have been rebuilt. A newly commissioned sculpture, Contrails, shares the landscaped 10,000-square-foot green space.

Granddaughter Catherine Corrigan, a Dallas Foundation donor, said it wasn't difficult to convince her siblings and cousins to contribute to an improved Spirit of Flight park. She and her brother, David, a former Dallas Foundation chairman, share offices decorated with a scaled-down version of the sculpture outside and a red clay model in a display case inside.



Dallas Love Field Regional Airport

"Everybody respects what our grandfather did," she said. "We care about the city of Dallas. That's why we're participating."

Leo Corrigan Sr. used airports – a lot. His company built The Shops of Highland Park, but it also developed and owned hotels around the world, including properties in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Malta. So when the late Dallas Mayor R. L. Thornton asked Corrigan to underwrite a Love Field art commission, Corrigan agreed.

"Flight has made possible so much of whatever I've accomplished," Leo Corrigan Sr. said, according to a 1963 story in The Dallas Morning News. "When I came to Dallas in 1915, it took 24 hours to get to St. Louis by train. Now I can catch a plane right here and be in Hong Kong in 24 hours."

Generations of Dallasites and visitors have driven by the sculpture on their way to the airport terminal, said Kay Kallos, PhD, the city's public art program manager.

"It's a landmark for Love Field," she said. "People connect to it strongly. It gives them a sense of place. It's nice to have a visual touchstone when everything else around you is changing."

City officials expect to rededicate the sculpture later this year, after the new plantings have had a chance to establish themselves.