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Contact: Mary Flannery
215.937.5424
mary.flannery@phl.org

National Aviation Day Celebrated at Philadelphia International Airport

PHILADELPHIA – To commemorate the 77th anniversary of National Aviation Day, Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) hosted its annual celebration today with displays of vintage photos, appearances by famed Tuskegee Airmen Dr. Eugene J. Richardson and Dr. Cornelius Gaither, and members of the Airport community sharing information and celebrating aviation with the traveling public.

“Aviation is an amazing industry and this is the perfect day to celebrate its history with the traveling public, our colleagues and friends,” said Airport CEO Chellie Cameron. “We are especially honored to have with us today members of the Tuskegee Airmen, who played such an important role in our nation’s history as the first African-American military pilots.”

The Tuskegee Airmen and their representatives have been participating in PHL’s celebration of National Aviation Day for several years. Dr. Richardson served as a fighter pilot in World War II and Dr. Gaither was a medic for the Airmen. Harriet J. Bryant, President of The Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, also attended with several members of the organization.

The Tuskegee Airmen, named after Tuskegee, Alabama, where the young aviators trained, compiled achievements that include 95 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 8 Purple Hearts, and a Distinguished Unit Citation. Their remarkable military feats led to President Harry S. Truman’s Executive Order of 1948, which ended racial segregation in the United States armed forces. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Tuskegee Airmen experience.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection participated in the National Aviation Day event by sharing information about their respective organizations. As visitors walked along the B/C Connector, they took in vintage photos of the Airport dating to the 1920s.

National Aviation Day is celebrated on August 19, the birthday of Orville Wright, who with his brother, Wilbur, achieved the first successful airplane flights in 1903.

Philadelphia International Airport is owned and operated by the City of Philadelphia. The Airport is a self-sustaining entity that operates without the use of local tax dollars. It is one of the largest economic engines in Pennsylvania, generating an estimated \$14.4 billion in spending to the regional economy and accounting for more than 141,000 jobs.