



## ...And A Triumph It Was!

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Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Zoe Dell Nutter celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in a beautifully decorated airplane hangar, seated on an



*Zoe Dell Nutter greets guests at her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. (Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*

Zoe Dell's longtime close friend, Marilyn Berry, was the Presenting Sponsor for the event that drew over 400 guests, many of whom also sponsored tables. Singer Properties, current owners of the land committed to building the Triumph was a Distinguished Sponsor, the Ohlmann Group and the Jesse and Caryl Philips Foundation were both Supporting Patrons. In addition there were five gold tables, nine silver tables and eleven bronze tables

ornate throne, and situated in front of a replica of the model B Wright Flyer – exactly the right setting for the country's "first lady of aviation." Guests from all around Ohio, and a few from distant parts of the country, flocked in. She welcomed everyone personally from her vantage point as the center of attention, sharing the limelight with an 8 ft tall display model of the Triumph of Flight™ just a few feet away.

The venue, Commander Aero's 25,000 square foot hangar at Dayton-Wright Brothers Airport in Miamisburg, was graciously donated by owner John Bosch, and the Flyer provided by the Wright "B" Flyer, an all-volunteer group located at the same airport. Wright Image Group volunteers and consultants teamed to plan and execute the event.

Zoe Dell's desire was to make her birthday celebration a major fund raiser and "coming out" party for her new passion, building the Triumph of Flight™.



*Ken and Felita LaRoche with Zoe Dell. Felita sang the national anthem. (Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*

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purchased by other companies and individuals.

Many political figures from the Dayton Region attended, including state representatives Niraj Antani, Mike Henne, Ron Hood, Jim Butler, Rick Perales, and Bob Hackett. Zoe Dell's special guests were US Congressman Mike Turner and former Ohio governor and state senator George Voinovich, both of whom took the podium to wish Zoe Dell a happy birthday.



*Ohio Representatives (l to r) Antani, Henne, Butler, Perales, Hood, and Hackett presenting Zoe Dell an official birthday proclamation. (Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*



*Master of Ceremonies, Rob Reider, chatting with Governor Voinovich. (Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*

After working the Dayton-Vectren Air Show that day as Master of Ceremonies, Rob Reider artfully performed those same duties for Zoe Dell's birthday party. Rob came directly from the Dayton International Airport to Commander Aero to fill his emcee role - doing so with style, humor, and above all, an aura of aviation.

Congressman Turner captured the essence of the evening in his comments, saying, "She could have had a party anywhere around the world, but not only did she choose to have it here with us, she chose it to be part of a cause – her next cause – to be a fund raiser for our community, to make an iconic statement of the Wright Brothers' heritage. Zoe Dell, thank you for your legacy of giving, thank you for including us in your birthday celebration, and thank you for having a fund raiser right here in our community."

Although he was unable to attend personally, Governor John Kasich sent his warmest greetings in an official proclamation saying, "On behalf of the state of Ohio, we join your friends and family in wishing you a very happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. On this special day, may you be surrounded by the ones you love and reminded of the special memories you share. We send you our congratulations on this joyous occasion and extend our best wishes for an enjoyable celebration. Happy birthday, Zoe Dell."



*US Congressman Mike Turner wishing Zoe Dell a very happy birthday from the podium. (Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*

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*Helping Zoe Dell blow out the candles.  
(Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*

One of the many fun highlights of the evening was a video-taped message from John Travolta. A dear friend of Zoe Dell's, he had been invited but was unable to be there in person. Not wanting the occasion to pass without Zoe Dell hearing from him, he recorded this message, taped while airborne: "Happy birthday, baby girl. I'm here at 40,000 feet wishing you a happy 100<sup>th</sup> and thanking you for everything you do, for keeping aviation prominent, and keeping it safe, and keeping it exciting. We all love you very much, and have a fantastic night."



*Zoe Dell in earnest conversation with George Voinovich.  
(Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*

Then speaking about her current passion, building the Triumph of Flight™, he said, "I believe this monument will permanently cement the United States internationally, and Dayton, Ohio, as the birthplace of aviation." He went on to say, "This has got to be a public/private partnership. That's what we've got to commit ourselves to." Then speaking directly to Zoe Dell, he said, "I hope you're there when we break ground for this. It would be a triumph for your years and a triumph for aviation!"

Of course, there was a cake. A big cake – with "100" on the top and two rings of candles on the lower tiers. It was wheeled in from the side, presented to Zoe Dell, and Susie McLaughlin led the crowd in singing Happy Birthday. When the time came for Zoe Dell to blow out the candles, Reider called for "four able-bodied men" to help her do that!



*Zoe Dell chats with Mike Turner during dinner.  
(Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*



*Licensed pilot John Travolta in the cockpit.*

The most poignant message of the evening was delivered by former Governor Voinovich. In his remarks, he labeled Zoe Dell the "First Lady of Aviation in the USA."

Speaking of her role in establishing the National Aviation Hall of Fame here in Dayton, he said, "This is the lady that got it done!"



To join, make a donation, or get information explaining the different contribution and recognition levels, write to us at:

**Triumph of Flight™**  
1605 N. Main St  
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[www.wrightmonument.org](http://www.wrightmonument.org)

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*Zoe Dell addressing the crowd at her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party.  
(Photo courtesy of MainSail Productions, Inc.)*

After all the speeches and proclamations, Zoe Dell's grandchildren, Jonathan Nutter and Katie McCallum, took the podium to share several of their happiest childhood memories of "Grandma Zoe."

Then it was her turn. Reider carried the microphone to her and, remaining at her table, Zoe Dell addressed the crowd.

"I love the state of Ohio," she said. "I think it's so wonderful you'd come out and celebrate and honor me that I'm almost speechless, and I'm not usually speechless. But you've heard so much, and I just want to add my thanks to the many that you've had all day today and the celebrating we've had all week. ... I have had a wonderful life, and I just can't thank you all enough for all you have done, and for being here today and celebrating as you have. I'll never forget, and I think it was so much fun. I'll try to live another hundred years!"

The WIG is a proud partner of the National Aviation Heritage Alliance.

As such, we ask our donors to make checks out to the Aviation Heritage Foundation and mark them so that it is clear the donation is specifically intended for the Wright Image Group.

By flowing our donations through the foundation, the federal government will match a portion of them. This additional funding goes to support the aviation heritage of the entire region. (See instructions below)



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**If you have not yet made your gift to the Triumph in honor of Zoe Dell's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, go to [www.wrightmonument.org](http://www.wrightmonument.org) – "Make a Donation" and do that!**