

Town of Fairfield, Connecticut

Proclamation



- WHEREAS:** The Town of Fairfield proudly honors and recognizes the 117th anniversary of Gustave Whitehead's historic "First in Flight" which took place August 14, 1901—*prior* to the 1903 flight of the Wright Brothers in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina; and
- WHEREAS:** Whitehead, who had lived in both Fairfield and Bridgeport, performed a flight-test in June 1901 at a location about 1.5 miles from Bridgeport near the village (now Town) of Fairfield. The monoplane was his 57th aircraft in total and his 20th manned aircraft; and
- WHEREAS:** On August 14, 1901, Whitehead invited the press to watch him fly the world's first, successfully manned, powered aircraft. He left Bridgeport around midnight and literally drove his plane, the "Condor No. 21", to the same Fairfield site as the previous tests. Whitehead took off at dawn, flying half a mile at a height of up to 50 feet before smoothly landing in the area of what is now Jennings Beach; and
- WHEREAS:** After this unprecedented August 14, 1901 flight, Whitehead continued to make short flights before developing a more robust diesel engine, naming his new plane "No. 22" and piloting longer flights. He made a circular flight between Charles Island off Milford, Connecticut and Bridgeport in January 1902; and
- WHEREAS:** The revelation of Whitehead— Chief Engineer of America's first aviation organization and an instrumental figure in the advancement of aviation—first came to light when aviation historian John Brown discovered a panoramic photograph from 1901 showing Whitehead's inaugural flight in Fairfield; and
- WHEREAS:** This history changing event resulted in the world's foremost authority on aviation history, *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*, formally recognizing Whitehead for making history's first flight in a heavier-than-air aircraft; and
- WHEREAS:** In addition to Fairfield recognizing the incredible achievements of one of its own, the Connecticut state legislature officially recognized Whitehead, the "Father of Flight," predating the Wright Brothers' flight when both the house and senate unanimously approved a bill that was signed into law by the Governor and took effect on June 26, 2013; and
- WHEREAS:** Whitehead's flight is exciting and very meaningful, putting Fairfield in the spotlight with the most important milestone in aviation history.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Michael C. Tetreau, First Selectman of the Town of Fairfield, do hereby proclaim August 14, 2018 as

GUSTAVE WHITEHEAD DAY

in the Town of Fairfield and call upon all citizens in Fairfield to honor Gustave Whitehead for his ingenuity and leap of faith that resulted in an unforgettable legacy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the Town of Fairfield to hereby be affixed this 11th day of August, 2018.

Michael C. Tetreau
First Selectman