

# Town of Fairfield, Connecticut Proclamation



**WHEREAS:** The Town of Fairfield proudly joins the City of Bridgeport to honor and recognize the 122<sup>nd</sup> 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 preliminary flight tests during May-July of 1901, in Bridgeport's West End and the surrounding towns of Fairfield and Stratford. The monoplane was his 57<sup>th</sup> aircraft in total and his 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Turney Farm in Fairfield. Whitehead took off at dawn, flying half a mile at a height of up to 50 feet before smoothly landing in the area about ½ mile northeast of what is now Jennings Beach; and

**WHEREAS:** After this unprecedented August 14, 1901 flight, Whitehead continued to make short flight 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 history changing events of Whitehead's pioneering achievements resulted in the world's foremost authority on aviation history, *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*, formally recognizing Whitehead based on the total evidence, for making history's first flight in a heavier-than-air aircraft; and

**WHEREAS:** In addition to Fairfield and Bridgeport recognizing the incredible achievement of one of its own, the 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. Whitehead's flights in Fairfield and surrounding towns are exciting and very meaningful, putting our communities in the spotlight with the most important milestone in aviation history.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Brenda L. Kupchick, First Selectwoman of the Town of Fairfield, do hereby proclaim August 14, 2023 as

## ***GUSTAVE WHITEHEAD DAY***

in the Town of Fairfield and call upon all citizens in Fairfield, Bridgeport, and beyond to continue to honor Gustave Whitehead, Chief Engineer of America's first aviation organization and an instrumental figure in the advancement of aviation, for his unforgettable legacy and to join together to share our pride for the aviation pioneer who made history through his ingenuity and leap of faith.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the Town of Fairfield to hereby be affixed this 14<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2023.

*Brenda*

**Brenda L. Kupchick  
First Selectwoman**