

# Aviation Week Network and the IAC Name Former Southwest Airlines CEO Gary Kelly the L. Welch Pogue Recipient

*Awards Ceremony Takes Place on September 10, 2024*

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, May 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Aviation Week Network](#) and the [International Aviation Club](#) of Washington D.C. (IAC) today announce former [Southwest Airlines](#) CEO Gary Kelly is the recipient of the 2024 L. Welch Pogue Award for Lifetime Achievement in Aviation.

Kelly's extensive and influential career with Southwest Airlines began in 1986 when he joined the company as

Controller, moving up to Chief Financial Officer and Vice President Finance, then Executive Vice President and CFO in 2001, before being promoted to CEO and Vice Chairman in July 2004. Kelly assumed the roles of Chairman and President in 2008, and in 2022 he relinquished the role of President and CEO and assumed the role of Executive Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Kelly pioneered the airline's transformation through several major initiatives, including the acquisition of AirTran Airways, the repeal of the Wright Amendment, the launch of international destinations for the first time in Southwest's history, the installment of a new reservation system, and the launch of service to Hawaii in 2019. Southwest's success has prompted the global phenomenon of low-cost carriers becoming a part of the established international air transport industry, making safe air travel affordable to people everywhere.

Kelly is also a long-time supporter and advocate of aviation. He is a former Chairman of the Board of Airlines for America and is a member of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum Board.

The L. Welch Pogue Award was first presented in 1994 to L. Welch Pogue, the former chairman of



the Civil Aviation Board and a U.S. delegate at the Chicago Convention, which created the legal blueprint for post-WWII expansion of commercial aviation. The Award is presented annually to leaders who have made significant and lasting contributions to the global air transport industry and who are considered visionaries in modern aviation.

IAC President Amna Arshad said, "On behalf of IAC, our sincere congratulations to Gary for this highly-deserved recognition. Gary's stellar career has made him one of the best-known and most respected industry leaders in the world. Under his leadership, Southwest became an international player, while Gary was also instrumental in helping campaign for critical government funding via the U.S. Cares Act that enabled U.S. aviation to survive the devastating COVID pandemic."

Kelly said, "I am truly humbled and honored to receive this prestigious award, which is a testament to the People of Southwest Airlines for building one of the most admired companies in the world. I am especially delighted to be recognized alongside so many notable and esteemed aviation pioneers—including my mentor and friend Herb Kelleher."

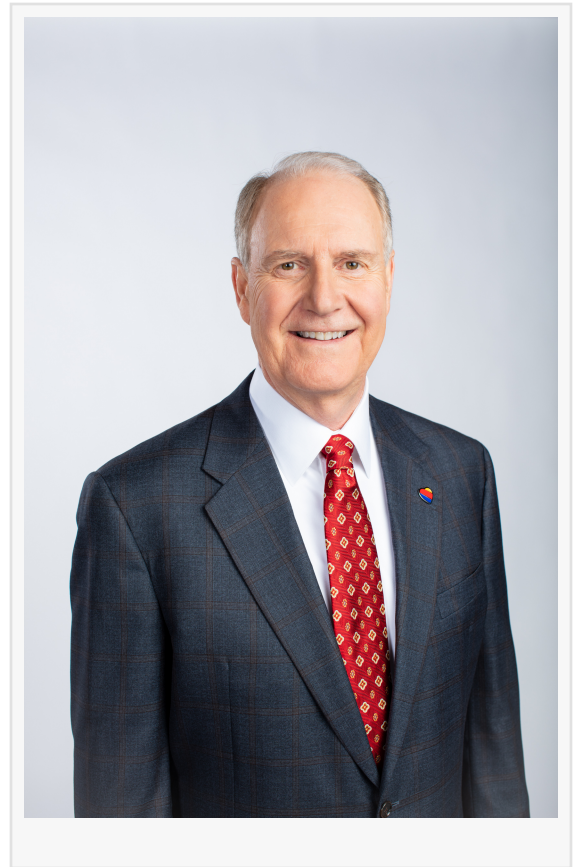
The 2024 L Welch Pogue Award will be presented to Kelly at a gala dinner at the Jones Day Building in Washington D.C, on September 10, 2024. Details on sponsorships and table purchases can be found at <https://iacwashington.wildapricot.org/>.

#### ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL AVIATION CLUB

Since 1961, the IAC of Washington D.C. has been the forum for new faces and new pronouncements affecting commercial aviation in the United States and the worldwide community. The IAC brings together aviation professionals who support a common objective of fostering and promoting the maintenance and development of aircraft, airports, air navigation and air transportation, international agreements, co-operation and treaties.

#### ABOUT AVIATION WEEK NETWORK

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