

Gov. Kelly unveils Earhart statue in Atchison

**(MSC News)--Governor Laura Kelly Saturday joined the Amelia Earhart Foundation in honoring its namesake with a statue unveiling ceremony. The bronze statue, located at the Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum, is the sister statue of the one that was installed in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol in July.**

**“How better to cement our state’s legacy as the Air Capitol of the World than with a statue at the museum that celebrates a woman who showed all of us what it means to “reach for the stars,” Governor Laura Kelly said. “I want to express my deepest appreciation for this museum and for this mortalization of an extraordinary individual who truly represents the best of the Kansas spirit.”**

**Born and raised in Atchison, Kansas, Earhart received her pilot license in 1923 and subsequently championed the advancement of women in aviation. She is one of the world’s most celebrated aviators and the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Earhart was declared lost at sea when she disappeared over the Pacific Ocean in 1937.**

**"Amelia Earhart's bravery and relentless fighting for equality for women and girls still gives my generation strength and inspiration," Gabrielle Henry, Amelia Earhart's great-great niece, said. "It is an honor to have her blood run in my veins, and even more so to hold her values in my heart."**

**“Although it was a historic milestone to bring Amelia Earhart to the U.S. Capitol in July, we are especially thrilled to finally unveil this ‘twin’ bronze statue of Amelia in her beloved Atchison, Kansas, hometown,” Karen Seaberg, founder and president of the Atchison Amelia Earhart Foundation, said. “This magnificent statue will stand as an enduring symbol of Amelia’s pioneering legacy that will welcome and inspire future generations — especially the 150,000 middle school students within a 90-mile radius of Atchison — to explore aviation and aerospace careers through state-of-the-art STEM exhibits and interactive experiences in the Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum opening in 2023.”**

**“Amelia represents Kansas around the world as a bold, courageous, and forward-thinking woman. I think she’d be especially proud to know her Atchison hometown is close to the ‘Air Capital of the World’ in Wichita, Kansas,” Makinzie Burghart, Atchison native and Director of Development for the Atchison Amelia Earhart Foundation, said. “I look forward to welcoming everyone to the Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum — especially**

**young girls — to introduce them to Amelia’s pioneering aviation legacy and encourage them to bravely follow in her footsteps.”**

**Along with Amelia Earhart, Governor Kelly recognized a long legacy of pioneering women in Kansas history, including Susanna Salter, the first woman elected mayor in the United States in 1887; Georgia Neese Gray, who, during the Truman Administration, became the first woman to serve as United States Treasurer; and Lucinda Todd, a civil rights activist and one of the petitioners in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.**

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