



NEWS RELEASE

GenAIRations: How one family honors decades of friendship and legacy

2025-08-08

On a brutally cold morning in 1989, Anthony “Tony” Davis hopped onto the American Airlines employee bus to make his way to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. A spry young pilot, he smiled and greeted everyone onboard with a cheerful “Good morning!”

But it hadn’t been the best morning for Flight Attendant Susan Forrest. Susan, who joined American in 1987, had trouble getting to work because of the frigid weather, and she woke up early to scrape the ice off her car and fill up her tank before parking and catching the same bus. But Tony’s happy 5 a.m. spirit caught her eye.

They ran into each other sometime later at a jazz concert in Arlington, Texas, and were formally introduced by a mutual friend. They went out to eat after the concert, and Tony wrote his name and phone number on a tortilla.

An undated photo of Tony in the cockpit.

“He folded it up and gave it to me, and he said, ‘I’m going to give this to you just in case, but if I call you in 10 days, will you go out with me?’” Susan says. “I laughed and thought to myself, ‘Ten days? That’s quite a line!’”

Susan Forrest became Susan Davis in 1991. Over the next three decades, the couple welcomed two sons, Drew and Evan, and celebrated dozens of milestones throughout their careers at American — in very good company. Tony’s childhood best friend and recently retired pilot, Robert “Bob” Mortenson, and Tony’s sister, Flight Attendant Michelle McDonogh, were also part of the American team. And soon, Drew, Tony and Susan’s eldest son and Cadet Academy graduate, will embark on a new journey as a cadet with Envoy, a wholly owned regional of American.

"Blessed is the word that comes to mind," Tony says of his 37-year career. "So incredibly blessed, and a lot of good luck in there, too."

Drew, Tony and Susan on a flight.

Tony's career at American

Tony and Bob grew up together, with Tony's father being a Navy pilot in World War II and the Korean War, and Bob's as a pilot in the Air Force during the Vietnam War era. Bob's father was instrumental in Tony's decision to pursue aviation, mentoring the young men throughout their college years to join the Air Force.

Tony ended up with a slot at the airlift squadron at Travis Air Force Base flying cargo while Bob got a fighter slot. A few years later, they were both hired at American. Tony flew back to California every few weeks to fulfill his Air Force duties until about 1993.

Tony's sister Michelle "saw how much fun they were having" and joined American as a flight attendant in 1995. She was initially based in California before getting married and transferring to Chicago. With Susan, the quartet spent decades together, flying together and meeting up on distant layovers whenever possible. Some of Tony's favorite memories include family trips to Australia and New Zealand, taking his boys on layovers occasionally and a flight to London with Susan for her birthday.

Between Susan and Tony, working together also meant they could care for their sons in ways those working a traditional work schedule couldn't. With various weekdays off and the ability to trade around shifts, one parent was always around for the boys.

"I wouldn't have been able to see all their games, graduations and piano recitals," Susan says. "I'm most appreciative of the flexibility."

Siblings Michelle and Tony pictured in their American uniforms.

In his 37-year career, Tony spent thousands of hours flying, but some flights are more memorable than others. In September 2021, Tony had the honor of bringing home the remains of **Fr. Emil Kapaun** from Honolulu to his family in Wichita, Kansas. Fr. Kapaun was a Captain and Chaplain in the U. S. Army during the Korean War. He died in a prisoner of war camp, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor and is currently being considered for Sainthood.

During that layover in Honolulu before the return flight, Tony went to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, completely unaware of where Fr. Kapaun's remains were kept.

"I just wanted to get a feel for where he was," Tony says. "Miraculously, I walked up, turned right, looked up at the wall, and I was standing in front of his very resting spot at the time."

Perhaps the most memorable flights were Tony's retirement flights in mid-July 2025 between Honolulu and Dallas-Fort Worth. There was certainly precious cargo onboard, including Susan, Drew, Evan, two of Tony's sisters — including Michelle — and a brother-in-law. Bob wasn't on the flight, but he made it to the gate for the send-off.

The crew, all of whom knew Tony, all bid to work the flight together so they could make the journey as special as possible.

"I was surrounded by family, friends and colleagues from American Airlines who all expressed in the sincerest ways their appreciation for my years of service, and they all bode me well-wishes for my years ahead," he says. "I soaked in every minute."

Tony (center) with First Officers Deacon Qualls (left) and Dan Williams (right), both of whom were on Tony's his retirement flight from DFW to Honolulu.

Continuing the aviation legacy

His dad was certainly an inspiration, but Drew says he felt his own pull toward the industry. After he flew his first solo flight, there was a shift.

"Immediately after I took off, I came back in and landed the plane for the first time. I was taxiing back on the tarmac, I just kind of burst into tears. It was an overwhelming emotion," Drew says. "I felt connected through the generations — to my dad and to my grandfather. That was a really nice moment when I knew that this was the path that was right for me."

Drew became a cadet at the Cadet Academy in June 2022, and he was recently accepted to be an Envoy Cadet. Once he reaches his required flight hours, he'll start his formal training as a first officer for Envoy.

One day, Drew hopes to become a mainline pilot, like his dad, hopefully at American. He's also hoping for the same journey his parents had: One filled with a lot of gratitude.

Drew was was recently accepted to be an Envoy Cadet. He hopes to follow in his father's footsteps.

"Luck probably follows people with great attitudes and people who have love and kindness in their hearts," Drew says. "And I think both my parents have that."