

FREDERICK W. SMITH, DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS



Frederick W. Smith is founder of FedEx, the first overnight express delivery company in the world. As chairman, president, and CEO, Smith transformed FedEx from a start-up serving twenty-five cities in the United States to an internationally renowned, technologically advanced company that serves more than 220 countries and territories and handles more than nine million shipments each day. Its six subsidiaries, 700 aircraft, 90,000 vehicles, and more than 300,000 team members make FedEx the world's leading express transportation provider.

As a child, Mr. Smith was fascinated by airplanes, and he became a skilled amateur pilot in his teens, honing his skills while operating a crop duster. He enrolled in Yale College in 1962 and majored in economics. It was in the course of writing a paper for class on the enormous potential of overnight delivery services in an increasingly globalized and technological world that he first explored the concept that would inspire FedEx.

Mr. Smith originally planned to attend law school after earning his bachelor's degree in 1966. Instead, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served two tours of duty in Vietnam between 1966 and 1969. He received the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts for his service and returned to the United States having achieved the rank of Captain.

Mr. Smith's firsthand observation of the military's procurement and delivery practices further inspired his dream of developing an integrated air-ground commercial delivery industry. He bought Ark Aviation in 1970 and founded Federal Express the following year. After losses of \$27 million in its first two years, FedEx has become, over the last forty, a \$43-billion global transportation, business services, and logistics company under Mr. Smith's stewardship and strategic planning.

FedEx relies on the understanding that up-to-date information about the origin, present location, and estimated time of arrival of packages is equally important. Applauded for continually adopting technological advancements and new partnerships to achieve these goals, Mr. Smith ensures that FedEx keeps up with and often outpaces global demand. In 2001, FedEx installed drop boxes in post offices across the United States in return for handling large mail and international express shipments for the Postal Service. It also purchased the document services company Kinko's and started FedEx Kinko's (now FedEx Office) print centers across the United States. FedEx has been recognized on Fortune's World's Most Admired Companies, 100 Best Companies to Work For, and Blue Ribbon Companies lists.

Recognizing the advantages of FedEx's extensive network and resources in times of crisis, Mr. Smith has provided humanitarian aid around the world by donating relief funds and pilots' time. During the 2005 hurricane season, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, FedEx shipped more than two million pounds of relief aid to the Gulf Coast.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Smith has been an active advocate of free trade and "open skies agreements." A supporter of a cogent energy policy, he cochairs the Energy Security Leadership Council, seeking energy independence for America. He has also served as the Co-Chairman of the U.S.—France Business Council and the U.S.—China Business Council. He and United States Senator Bob Dole co-chaired the national World War II Memorial Campaign.

Mr. Smith has received various awards and honors, including the Wright Brothers Trophy, the highest honor of the National Aeronautic Association in 1996. He has also earned the Circle of Honor Award from the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation (2008), the George C. Marshall Foundation Award (2010), the Global Leadership Award from the U.S.—India Business Council (2011), the Tony Jannus Award from the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society (2011), and the Al Ueltschi Humanitarian Award IN 2012.