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(Highlights and full text of address by Col. Charles A. Lindbergh, in accepting award of the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy, at Aero Club of Washington banquet, Saturday evening, December 17, 1949.)

"We talk about flying to the moon as freely as people talked about flying from one city to another before that December day at Kitty Hawk." (1903)

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"Flying has become a science in which the mind ascends, and the body becomes an increasingly unnecessary part....As we have progressed in the science of aviation, we have separated ourselves from the balanced quality of life."

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"We must not let science hypnotize us into believing that simply by sitting in front of desks and drawing boards and instruments all day, we are contributing to the character of man."

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"I believe that for permanent survival, he (man) must balance science with other qualities of life, qualities of body and spirit as well as those of mind—qualities he cannot develop when he lets mechanics and luxury insulate him too greatly from the earth to which he was born. We must realize that even vision and judgement depend upon the body as well as on the mind."

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"If we are to be finally successful, we must measure scientific accomplishments by their effect on man himself."

Address Before Annual Wright Dinner
Aero Club of Washington
by Charles A. Lindbergh
December 17, 1949

Orville and Wilbur Wright will always inspire the men who follow them in aviation. To be awarded the trophy which bears their name is an honor I appreciate beyond the ability of my words to describe.

Looking at the model of that early plane brings conflicting emotions to my mind. We who meet on the anniversary of Kitty Hawk have marvelled at the growth and changing forms of aircraft. Many of us have seen, with our own eyes, the metamorphosis of the Wright biplanes into supersonic prototypes with close to thirty times their speed. Now, we plan huge rockets that will travel, faster than a rifle's bullet, for thousands of miles. And we talk about flying to the moon as freely as people talked about flying from one city to another before that December day at Kitty Hawk.

The Wright brothers, with their first power-driven flights, opened the door to all this progress. They are symbolic, to us, of the pioneer-his daring, his vision, his fortitude. They represent a quality in western man without which our civilization could not survive. For generations, we have based our progress on discovery, and protected our nations through the invention and use of new tools. Today, whether it be for peace or war, we westerners depend on wings. We depend on past, present, and future contributions of men like the Wright brothers.

But the Wright brothers, being pioneers, also symbolize a quality of life which withers in an atmosphere of scientific progress. As they represent progress on the one hand, they represent the "log cabin days" of aviation on the other. And from the log cabin, there is much that modern man could learn.

One need only glance at a picture of their first flight to realize the difference between the life they lived and ours. Orville lies prone in the open air, on top of his lower wing; while Wilbur runs with him against the wind, over a sandy flat. While their minds were studying structures and the aerodynamics of flight, their bodies were in contact with sun and earth, and weather.

We hear mariners speak nostalgically of the era of iron men and wooden ships. In a similar sense, I sometimes feel that the decline of aviation began with the self starter and the closed cockpit. Before the advent of these items, and the instruments that went with them, flying was an art that required the use of the body and all its senses. In that early environment, a man could keep in better balance. He spent much of his time in the country, for he flew from farmers' fields. He experienced the beauty of sunset. His skin felt the freshness of rain. He had to know texture of earth and shading of grass to keep from nosing over in a mire. Pulling a stubborn engine through kept his muscles in condition. He relied on sight of horizon, touch of control, sound of engine.

He might even test a battery by taste.

Now, flying has become a science in which the mind ascends, and the body becomes an increasingly unnecessary part. Hurtling through the air in a jet fighter, or vibrating through cloud on multi-engine instruments, hour after hour, I realize how intellectual flying has become. We no longer sense the qualities of earth and air. We look at almost everything through print and glass. Today, we press a button to engage an automatic pilot to carry us across an unseen ocean, or to destroy an unseen city below.

Our engineers crowd air-conditioned drafting rooms, and seldom use their hands to test their theories. Our pilots fly in supercharged and heated cabins. They judge their weather through ticker tapes and crayoned paper sheets. As we have progressed in the science of aviation, we have separated ourselves from the balanced quality of life.

The dream of the Wright brothers was to build a power-driven airplane, and to fly it successfully. They accomplished that dream; and we, their disciples, have perfected it to a high degree. Now, as in so many phases of modern life, we are faced with a different problem. How are these perfected aircraft to be used for the benefit of man, to raise his standards in the deeper sense?

Great factories full of workers, great speeds over the surface of the earth, great destructive power, such items are impressive; they are even essential to our survival in these chaotic years. But in themselves, they do not contribute to the quality of human life. We must not let science hypnotize us into believing that simply by sitting in front of desks and drawing boards and instruments all day, we are contributing to the character of man.

Personally, I am convinced that man cannot thrive indefinitely in the hot-house atmosphere we are creating. I believe that for permanent survival, he must balance science with other qualities of life, qualities of body and spirit as well as those of mind—qualities he cannot develop when he lets mechanics and luxury insulate him too greatly from the earth to which he was born. We must realize that even vision and judgment depend upon the body as well as on the mind. It is for this reason I say that the Kitty Hawk plane stirs conflicting emotions within me. As it symbolizes our progress, it also symbolizes qualities of life we have left behind and which, to be successful in a deeper sense, we must retrieve.

How are we to retrieve these qualities? Certainly we cannot turn back the clock. Certainly it cannot be done in any revolutionary way without greater loss than gain. I believe it can be done only through a re-orientation of our standards, only by placing the character of man above the value of his products. If we are to be finally successful, we must measure scientific accomplishments by their effect on man himself.

In honoring the Wright brothers, it is proper and customary to emphasize their contribution to scientific progress. But I believe it is equally important to emphasize the qualities in their pioneering life, and the character in man

that such a life produced. The Wright brothers balanced success with modesty; science, with simplicity. At Kitty Hawk, their intellects and senses worked in mutual support. They represented man in balance. And from that balance came wings to lift a world.

These meetings will stretch forward into eras of supersonic and, possibly, even inter-planetary flight. We cannot predict with certainty what discoveries and developments the future will unroll. But December 17th will always create opportunities for us to learn from, as well as to honor, the qualities of great pioneers.

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