

Couples volunteer together as part of TUL's Ambassadors program
BY CASEY SMITH World Business Writer Jun 7, 2015

Carol and David Dunning, who will celebrate 61 years of marriage in November, met at the Tulsa airport in 1952. Both were working as ticket agents for Braniff International Airways.

The couple is still together at the airport decades later, this time as Airport Ambassadors. Each has put in more than 1,800 hours in their roles representing the airport and the city since beginning their bi-weekly shifts in April 1997.

Carol said that at first, she didn't care for David but eventually agreed to go out with him. "I said 'I'll go, but I want to go dutch because I don't want to be indebted to you,' " she said with a smile. Of course, he finally won her over. "I thought any boy that is that good to his mother must be good," she said.

The Dunnings said they first learned about the Airport Ambassador program in the newspaper and decided together that it would be a fun thing to try.

After working for Braniff, David had gone on to have a career at PSO, but Carol worked for airlines companies throughout her career before retiring in 1992. She then realized she missed being around the airport. "It's exciting. There's something about it," she said. "Everything is on a schedule, and you have to keep it moving."

The first face you see
Can they help you? Airport Ambassadors celebrate 20th anniversary
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Love connection
David Dunning, 83, is in his 18th year volunteering as an ambassador.

Once, a winter storm sidelined a Nigerian college student's flight. The delay caused him to arrive at Tulsa International Airport on a Monday, instead of on Saturday when a bus had been available to take the man and other international students to the Northeastern State University's campus in Tahlequah. Rather than let the man take a several-hundred-dollar cab ride to Tahlequah, Dunning personally drove him.

The man has since moved to Tulsa and now attends Dunning's church, said Dunning's wife, Carol, who has also served as an Airport Ambassador since 1997. "He's just a marvelous person," Carol Dunning said. "He's a great friend of ours."

Carol Dunning, 85, said that the interactions volunteers have with all of the different people who come through the airport is her favorite thing about the gig.

"(I like) meeting the different people and the different places people are from," Carol Dunning said. "And if you help someone, it's really a plus."

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