



Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO

# Milestones

**1945** Air Line Stewardesses Association wins recognition as first union for flight attendants.



**1946** First union contract raises United flight attendants' monthly pay to \$155, limits duty hours, sets rest periods and establishes a grievance procedure.

**1947** ALSA President Ada Brown, 30, marries and becomes a victim of United's no-marriage rule.

Retires from career and union presidency.

**1949** ALSA merges with the Air Line Pilots Association affiliate, the Air Line Stewards and Stewardesses Association (ALSSA).



**1951** ALSSA represents 3,300 flight attendants. Pilots' opposition to union shop and flight attendants' desire to acquire a charter with the American Federation of Labor threatens ALSSA's relationship with ALPA.

**1952** Civil Air Administration requires flight attendants on commercial aircraft as cabin safety professionals.



**1960** ALPA creates two divisions, the Pilots Division and the Steward and Stewardesses Division. Nearly half of the nation's 8,700 flight attendants vote to affiliate with ALPA's S & S Division.

**1964** Civil Rights Act passes. Flight attendants use Title VII of the act to challenge discriminatory policies based on gender, race, age, weight, pregnancy and marital status.

**1968** Average career for flight attendants lasts 18 months. Mandatory resignation at ages 30-35 struck down.



**1971** Pressed by AFA, courts prohibit airlines from refusing to hire males, find United's no-marriage rule illegal.

**1973** Modern AFA is born when ALPA's S&S Division becomes the Association of Flight Attendants.

**1974** Court rules Northwest Airlines must pay female flight attendants same scale as males.

**1975** In court, AFA challenges requirement that flight attendants stop working upon pregnancy.

**1978** Congress passes the Airline Deregulation Act, giving airlines unlimited authority over routes, scheduling and fare pricing.

**1979** AFA litigation results in liberalizing airlines' weight policies.

**1981** Nationwide AFA campaign helps kill FAA plan to reduce the number of cabin crew members.



**1982** AFA represents 22,000 flight attendants at 18 carriers.

**1984** Fulfilling a quest by AFA leaders since the union's founding in 1946, AFA is granted a charter by the AFL-CIO. AFA prodding results in new FAA rules requiring floor-level exit lights, less flammable cabin interiors and other cabin safety breakthroughs.

**1987** Years of pressure from AFA prompts FAA to issue a policy limiting number of passenger carry-on bags.

**1988** Lobbying before Congress results in smoking ban on domestic flights of two hours or less.



**1990** AFA petitions FAA to apply OSHA standards to flight attendants. Smoking ban goes into effect on all domestic flights.

**1991** AFA hosts first international flight attendant symposium, sharing ideas with flight attendants from Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, South Korea, Norway, Singapore and Sweden.

**1994** AFA CHAOS™ campaign of intermittent work stoppages upheld in court; results in landmark contract settlement at Alaska Airlines. USAir weight program suspended following litigation by AFA. FAA issues duty-time regulations for flight attendants.

**1995** Representing 36,000 flight attendants at 23 airlines, AFA celebrates its first half century of union achievements.

**1996** AFA's aggressive pursuit of safety issues following the Everglades ValuJet crash provokes major changes at FAA, shifting the agency's focus to safety, and resulting in closer scrutiny of safety issues at start-up carriers.

**1997** AFA Board of Directors makes major commitment to organizing, creating new organizing fund to unite all flight attendants in AFA.

**1998** AFA fights to limit carry-on baggage, sponsoring an industry conference on the problem and introducing a proposed rule to the FAA restricting size and weight of carry-ons.

**1999** America West flight attendants achieve victory with a solid first contract on the eve of a CHAOS strike after nearly 10 years of struggle with a recalcitrant employer. AFA membership tops 46,000 members at 26 airlines, residing in every U.S. state and many countries around the world.



**2000** After intensive lobbying efforts, AFA wins four major legislative victories: whistleblower protection, increased penalties for crewmember interference, study of cabin air quality, and an international smoking ban.



**2001** In the wake of the September 11 attacks that killed 25 flight attendants on four hijacked aircraft, AFA members and leaders descend on Capitol Hill to lobby Congress for airline security legislation. AFA fights to protect thousands of furloughed flight attendants who lost their jobs as a result of the terrorist attacks.

**2002** AFA members continue to lobby for improved security, including certification for all flight attendants, and press airlines to provide mandatory safety training. Nearly 50,000 flight attendants at 26 airlines bring AFA to its largest and most influential level to date.

**2003** Decades after AFA leadership set forth their objectives in the AFA Constitution & Bylaws and after nearly a year-long battle on Capitol Hill, Congress passed flight attendant certification legislation on November 21.

**2004** A majority vote of AFA members results in a merger with the 700,000 member-strong Communications Workers of America (CWA). The merger results in member access to greater resources as well as significant expansion in the union's ability to influence legislation critical to the preservation of flight attendant jobs.

**2006** Northwest Airlines flight attendants vote to join AFA-CWA expanding membership to a total of 55,000 flight attendants under the AFA-CWA umbrella.

**2007** AFA-CWA convinces Congress to pass legally-binding seniority protection for airline workers involved in airline mergers. The law prevents one group of airline workers from stapling another group of workers to the bottom of a seniority list and provides a process for equitable seniority integration.

AFA-CWA pressures Congress to enact and fund the first comprehensive flight attendant fatigue study in the history of our industry.



**2009** In the second week of 2009, Ryan International and Lynx Aviation flight attendants vote for AFA-CWA representation. Flight attendants at USA3000 and Compass join AFA-CWA in October and November, respectively.

The Office of Management and Budget, in conjunction with its interagency Standard Occupational Classification Policy Committee, grants AFA-CWA's petition to reclassify flight attendants from personal care and service workers to transportation and material moving occupations in the Federal government's Standard Occupational Classification. This reclassification moves flight attendants into the same category as pilots, mechanics and other certified aviation workers.

In the first 100 days of the Obama administration, former AFA-CWA President Linda Puchala is appointed to the National Mediation Board (NMB)—a promising move toward restoring the Board's integrity. The NMB's mission is to protect the right of employees to engage in free and fair collective bargaining in the rail, aviation and trucking industries.

Following a rigorous and persistent campaign, AFA-CWA finally wins FMLA coverage for flight attendants. Congress adopts technical correction to the Family and Medical Leave Act that previously excluded many flight crew because of the unique way in which our hours are counted.