

From Southwest Airlines Intern to Designing our Freedom One Livery

July 29 is National Intern Day and we're celebrating all week at Southwest Airlines by highlighting the stories of some of our former Interns!

Prior to his 11 years as a Sr. Graphic Designer and designing Southwest's newest livery, Eric Daniels was an Intern on our Creative Studio Team. Read on to hear his story from Intern to full-time Employee and his passion for working at Southwest.



My First Experience with Southwest

One of my first experiences on an airplane was when I flew to my interview for an internship at Southwest. On my way back from the interview, at a layover in Chicago, I got the call offering me the position. Shocked and proud, I called my family and friends to tell them the good news. As a student at Youngstown State University in Ohio, being far from family and friends made me nervous but I was excited to embark on an incredible opportunity.







Celebrating my Southwest internship with Director Talent Acquisition Greg Muccio
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I felt at ease as I met People—it was a new Family welcoming me in for the semester. My internship experience at Southwest was unbelievable. I expected the typical internship duties of taking notes and running coffee orders; however, I was pleasantly surprised. My Leaders gave me real responsibility to own projects that made an impact on Southwest. The real-world experience prepared me for my current role beyond a college classroom, and it gave me a realistic view of what a career at Southwest could look like. In addition to the professional experience, I remember traveling to San Francisco using my flight privileges with a group of four other Interns who I still stay in touch with today.

Celebrating The Southwest Way

During my fall internship, I was lucky enough to celebrate Halloween—this is one of the biggest events at Southwest! Now as I see Leaders and Employees go all out for the celebration, I'm reminded of my internship experience and how impactful it was in getting me to where I am now. The initial feeling of Family on my first day has only continued the past 11 years as a full-time Employee as my Team is extremely close-knit.





Me in front of the Disney Pixar “Coco”-Themed Aircraft I designed in 2017

When I applied to the internship, I’d heard about the Company Culture and reputation for being a great place to work. Having experienced it firsthand, it is as great as it seems—the Culture, the Fun-LUVing atmosphere, and the Family. It actually is what People say it is. I enjoy being in an environment that allows me to contribute to the strength of Southwest’s Culture by using my skillset and creativity to support and serve other Teams as we collaborate on projects.

Designing Freedom One

In 2019, my Team created concepts for a new livery to honor members of the military. Although my Team had never attempted anything like this before, I was ready for the challenge. One of my concepts was selected as the winning design! My inspiration for this specialty livery was a waving flag, which included specific details such as the true “Old Glory” colors with exactly 50 stars and 13 stripes.

This challenge allowed me to work with various Teams and experts specializing in paint and aircraft stenciling. I oversaw the painting in Spokane while [my Cohearts created the time-lapse of Freedom One](#). When the [new livery was unveiled at Southwest’s 50th Anniversary celebration](#), it brought tears to the eyes of Employees and Customers. One of my favorite moments from that day was meeting Southwest Military Ambassadors and members of the Military Council—seeing their reactions to the livery before the big reveal was unforgettable. Although this project challenged me, I’m grateful for the learning experience. It’s amazing to think that something I designed inspires so many People. The entire experience was surreal and the best opportunity for a Designer at Southwest! In the future, I look forward to new opportunities for my Team to work together and use our creativity to show our love for Southwest.



Me in front of Freedom One with Southwest's Military Ambassadors and members of the Military Council

As an Intern, I never imagined I would have the opportunity to design a completely new livery for the Company or work with a close-knit Team. If an internship with real experience and a career with Heart interests you, you're encouraged to apply!

If you are interested in a career at Southwest Airlines, visit careers.southwestair.com or [join our Talent Community!](#)

Are you interested in an internship at Southwest Airlines? If so, please complete our [Campus Reach Interest Form](#) for notifications on 2022 opportunities or check out the [Campus Reach page](#) to read more about our internships!