



NEWS RELEASE

CONNECTICUT ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

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Air Museum Director Elected to Honorary Membership in the Academy

Rocky Hill, CT — The Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) has elected Michael P. Speciale, Executive Director of the New England Air Museum (the Museum), to Honorary Membership. CASE will present the award at its 39th Annual Meeting and Dinner on June 5th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell.

The CASE Governing Council created the category of Honorary Membership in 2009 to recognize an individual not otherwise eligible for membership. The council nominates, and selects by vote, the recipients of this honor. Speciale is recognized for his 29 years as executive director of the Museum.

His tenure began six years after the disastrous 1979 tornado which nearly destroyed the Museum. At that time the Museum had relocated to its current site and had a substantial mortgage on its only building with no cash reserves. Speciale helped to create new and innovative exhibits, and oversaw the restoration of numerous aircraft and the construction of two new exhibit hangars. With the assistance of the 58th Bomb Wing, he created a special hangar to preserve the history of these veterans and their accomplishments during World War II. The once-struggling Museum now boasts an additional 62,000 square feet and nearly 60,000 annual visitors.

In addition, Speciale incorporated special events into the Museum's programming, instituted a corporate partnership program, and created a weekend, school holiday and summer program that makes Museum educators available to teach the public about the science of aviation. He also oversaw the creation and funding of the SOAR for Science program which teaches students the concepts of flight through discussion, demonstration and hands-on activity, reaching over 135 classrooms in Connecticut. While proud of the Museum's accomplishments, Speciale is quick to credit his talented staff (4 full-time, 16 part-time) and a dedicated cadre of more than 150 volunteers.

Speciale earned his bachelor's degree from Fordham College and holds a master's degree in social work from Fordham University's School of Social Service, as well as a master's in public administration from University of Hartford. Speciale began his career as a social worker for the Community Church of New York and went on to work for the Greater Hartford United Way and later the United Way Connecticut, where he helped to develop and was the first director of the statewide 211 Infoline program.

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The Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering was chartered by the General Assembly in 1976 to provide expert guidance on science and technology to the people and to the state of Connecticut, and to promote the application of science and technology to human welfare and economic well being. For more information about the Academy, visit www.ctcase.org.

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