

## A super sendoff from the Mad Dog

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Each month in American Way, we feature an article written from the perspective of an American Airlines team member — a unique way to connect the airline's customers with the people who care for them on life's journey. For the August issue, we decided to try something a little different, turning over the keyboard to one of our aircraft. It turns out it's hard to type with landing gear, but our beloved MD-80 found a way. Check out the Mad Dog's farewell letter to customers and team members below.

Photo by Josh Smith

You may not know me that well. But if you fly American Airlines a lot, chances are we've met. My name is Mad Dog. Okay, it's more of a nickname, really ... short for McDonnell Douglas MD-80. My parents liked to say I was a Super 80. I couldn't agree more.

You're probably wondering why an airplane is writing a magazine article. Well, for starters, we have a lot of downtime at night. But the main reason is ... I'm calling it a career. On Sept. 4, I'll retire to Roswell, New Mexico, making way for some youngsters from Airbus and Boeing. My remaining siblings — about two dozen MD-80s in all — will also shine up their polished aluminum that day for one final flight into the sunset.

Leaving the rest of the fleet behind — with its fancy satellite Wi-Fi, bigger overhead bins and in-seat power — is bittersweet, the end of a journey that began in 1983. Throughout the decade, we helped launch American's hub-and-spoke system as the airline's workhorse. More than 350 of us filled the sky for American when we merged with TWA in 2001. And though we mostly flew domestically, we connected the biggest cities in the country, making meetings and memories for millions of customers.

In doing so, we made our presence known. Many of you loved the signature growl of our engines. Others liked the

peaceful calm up front — none more than our pilots. To all of them for pointing us in the right direction; to the flight attendants who walked our aisles, caring for customers; to the mechanics who kept these old dogs feeling like young pups; and to the thousands of other team members who welcomed us to the gate, loaded bags and cargo, or simply came along for the ride — thanks for the memories, from the bottom of our hydraulic hearts.

Of course, without customers, we're never born. You're the reason we kept flying and why we can park for the final time with our tails held high. So on behalf of American's 130,000 team members, our entire fleet, and particularly my fellow retirees, I tip my wing. Thank you for flying with us for the last 36 years. In the words of my favorite '80s tune, I've had the time of my life. And I owe it all to you.

McDonnell Douglas MD-80