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## **Wiley Post**

March 16, 1900–August 15, 1935

*Best Known For:* Wiley Post set two round-the-world flight-duration records in 1931 and 1933 in his aircraft, the *Winnie Mae*, and was responsible for significant research advances in high altitude flight.

*Background:* As a well-known barnstormer, stunt-flyer, and serious pilot in the 1920s, Wiley Post pursued a career of promoting aviation. Post had lost his left eye as a young man working in oil fields in his native Oklahoma, but his devotion to flying helped him retrain his remaining eye so that he could continue flying. Early in his flying career, he began studying the atmosphere and how air temperature and altitude affected aircraft in flight.

He set his first aviation speed record in 1930 by flying from Los Angeles to Chicago in 9 hours, 9 minutes, 4 seconds. Then, in 1931, he and Harold Gatty, his navigator, set a round-the-world speed record of 8 days, 15 hours, 15 minutes. In 1933, he made the first solo round-the-world flight and broke his own record by completing the trip in 7 days, 19 hours. Post's objective for both round-the-world flights was to prove that man could endure long-range flight.

In addition to his work promoting aviation, Post made a series of high-altitude test flights. For these flights, he developed special aircraft equipment, engine improvements, and the first effective pressure suit. These scientific efforts were significant contributions in developing modern test pilot and astronaut survival equipment.

On August 15, 1935, Post died in a plane crash in Alaska with his longtime friend and aviation enthusiast, Will Rogers.

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