



The Spirit of the NBBQA



One of my favorite movies of all time is *The Spirit of St. Louis* about the famed aviator, Charles Lindbergh. By the age of 25, Charles had captured the heart of not only the United States but of the world when he made the first non-stop transatlantic flight from New York to Paris, France. In 1927 Charles Lindbergh went from being a mail carrier to receiving the Medal of Honor by rising to

a challenge conceived by the hotel mogul Raymond Orteig. While many aviators attempted to win this prize, it took the tenaciousness of a humble aviator from Michigan to achieve what was thought to be an impossible flight.

Watching the movie, you get a sense of what kind of



spirit it took to make this historic flight. Not just Lindbergh's spirit, although we'll get to that, but the spirit of all things surrounding the event. The bold spirit of Raymond Orteig who made this "impossible" contest, not to mention the daring spirit of the pilots who took up the incredible challenge. The believing spirit of those St. Louis bankers and builders who supported Lindbergh on his quest to be the first to make this trek. Then there's the adventurous spirit which filled America as May 20, 1927 approached, cheering this mail carrier to succeed. Then we have the spirit of Lindbergh himself, the humble yet confident spirit which would carry him across the Atlantic Ocean, making him the first to do it solo.

Looking around the NBBQA you can also see an amazing spirit permeating throughout the membership which is never more apparent than two places, the National Conference and Memphis in May. The National Conference is the place where you're gathered around people who believe in you as a cook and who inspire you to do great things on your BBQ path. Then Memphis in May where everything we've learned or thought about is put into practice on our way to being conquerors of the world. It only makes sense with these two events, being so close on the calendar, they display the Spirit of the NBBQA.

The Spirit of Education

Heading into the conference each year the one thing I hear more often than any other is, "I can't wait to see you" or some variation of this. But when I leave all I hear is, "WOW! I can't wait to try this in my business." There are so many lessons learned through the years and so many great teachers unselfishly willing to impart wisdom upon all those who will listen. They aren't interested in the accolades they receive by being called a mentor but genuinely in helping you succeed. With two days of planned sessions one not to mention all the impromptu round tables happening all the time, one can't help finding that golden nugget to help your business.

At Memphis in May the Spirit of the NBBQA was evident from start to finish. One of the many examples of this was when guys of Boars Night Out, who have taught many classes at the NBBQA conference, took the time out of their own MiM chase to give advice to some first timers who were competing in the Patio division. It's this Spirit of Education which helped Southern Smoke BBQ become World Champions in their division.



The Spirit of Humble Confidence

If it's your first time to an NBBQA Conference you are undoubtedly awestruck when you find yourself included in a conversation or at a table with the likes of Mark Lambert, Mike Mills, Brad Orrison or Tuffy Stone. Each exuding this Spirit of Confidence until you get to know them, then you realize something more, a humbleness. They put on no pretense but talk to you, a mere novice, as if you are one of them, because, the spirit of humble confidence they possess allows to see you as a lover of all things BBQ and not whether you possess a World Championship.

This Spirit of Humble Confidence was on full display at Memphis in May during the NBBQA Brunch where Tuffy Stone was awarded the Legends Award "Pitmaster of the Year." With all he has accomplished from TV, restaurants, and the plethora of championships, Tuffy accepted the award with genuine tears displaying to all of us what a giant looks like. Which is exactly how he accepted the title of Memphis In May Grand Champion the very next day.

The Spirit of Adventure

Every year the National conference is brand new heading into uncharted waters which makes it an exciting adventure. Some have never been to this or that city. Some have never thought they would be this far along in their own BBQ journey, continually thank the NBBQA for being the North Star to find their way. This spirit of Adventure is why you aren't afraid to try a new flavor profile or cook something you've always wanted to try. This year we watched as people even cooked their first SCA contest. When I look back at this year's conference, I can only say the Spirit of Adventure was strong and I can't wait until Louisville, KY April 1-4, 2020.

During Memphis in May this spirit was on full display throughout the week. You can walk through this BBQ city and see structures like you've never seen before at a BBQ contest. Teams going out on a limb trying something new in the ancillaries hoping for a call. Even having a NBBQA brunch cooked by James Cruise complete with Bloody Mary's was an adventure all its own. One many have said should be listed as the first of many.

This list is just getting started and I know you are sitting there making your own list which could be here. We would love to hear from you and your thoughts about how you or someone you know embodies the Spirit of the NBBQA.