

Entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson turns 60

■ **1950:** Born July 18, in London, England

■ **1970:** Sets up mail-order record business

■ **1972:** Opens **Virgin Records** retail chain

■ **1984:** Launches **Virgin Atlantic Airways**

■ **1986-91:** Sets records for crossing Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by balloon, but fails in later attempts to circumnavigate globe

■ **1992:** Sells **Virgin Records** to EMI to keep airline afloat. Sues **British Airways** for libel over infamous “dirty tricks” campaign

■ **1993:** BA settles out-of-court. Branson shares \$1bn “BA bonus” damages among his staff

■ **2004:** Founds space tourism company, **Virgin Galactic**. Cost of trip into space is \$200,000



■ **2007:** **Virgin Earth Challenge** offers \$25m prize to find way to remove greenhouse gases from atmosphere to combat global warming

■ **2007:** Co-founds, and funds, **The Elders**, group of public figures including **Nelson Mandela**

■ **2009:** Unveils **VSS Enterprise** spacecraft, due to launch in 2011

■ **2010:** Branson's net worth estimated at \$4bn; empire spans air travel, rail, healthcare, telecommunications, finance and entertainment

