



Media Contact: Sandra Campbell – (816) 525-7505; (816) 260-0749

Fly - Sister - Fly!

For Immediate Release:

On Wednesday, August 13, 2008, at 7:30 a.m., members of the Bessie Coleman Foundation, Inc. (BCF) will host their third annual "**Fly-Sister-Fly Empowerment Breakfast**" at the Doral Resort and Spa in Miami, Florida. The event is being held in partnership with the Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP) and the Black Flight Attendants of America (BFAOA) to honor outstanding women of color in the field of aviation and aerospace.

With the theme, "Writing history is what humans do with power," the emcee and special guest for the breakfast will be internationally-renowned playwright and historical re-enactor, Sandra Campbell, who will bring to life the story and spirit of pioneer, daredevil aviatrix Bessie Coleman. It was the beautiful, brown-skinned, "*Queen Bess*" who paved the way for African Americans to achieve their aviation career aspirations. Bessie rose above seemingly insurmountable obstacles of racial and gender discrimination in the early Twentieth Century to become the *first American* to earn an international pilot's license. When she completed her training at L'ecole d'aviation des freres Caudron, and earned her license to fly from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale in Paris, she also became the *first African American (of record—male or female)* to get a pilot's license. The fact that this annual event is being held in Florida is significantly important since it was in Jacksonville, Florida, that Bessie (34) and her co-pilot, William Wills (24) met their demise on April 30, 1926, while testing her airplane for an airshow scheduled for the next day. Since writing the one-woman show, "Follow Your Dreams: The Bessie Coleman Story," in 1996, Ms. Campbell has performed in schools and communities throughout the U.S and in Paris in 2005, when she and a couple dozen other members of Bessie Coleman Foundation visited the Musee des Freres Caudron, where the memorabilia of the flying school and Bessie's achievements are archived. Ms. Campbell has received numerous awards and accolades for her performance, and it was produced before a live audience by Kansas City Public Television (PBS) in 2000. She continues to bring Bessie's spirit of hope, inspiration and determination to life before audiences around the country, and recently appeared on "Americans in Focus" at FoxSportsNet.com.

This year's program will also honor eight outstanding women in aviation fields for their contributions in their respective fields. These include: **Dr. Wanda Austin** - President and CEO of The Aerospace Corporation; **Dr. Eddie Glenn** - Retired Professor Illinois State – Coordinator of the 2007 BCF/OBAP ACE CAMP AT BENNETT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN; **Athina Holmes** - American Airlines Flight Attendant, IFR rated pilot; **Trisha Hughes** - First Officer Mesaba Airlines, CFI; **Rhonda Lyons** - Boeing Aircraft Experimental Flight Test Operations Manager; **Dr. Julianne Malveaux** - President Bennett College for Women; **Mary McDaniel** - FedEx Express Vice President of Material and Corporate Sourcing; **Arquila Todd** – Federal Aviation Administration Fort Worth ARTCC Air Traffic Controller, Received national award for her work with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

A goal of the Bessie Coleman Foundation, Inc. is to ensure that women of color are empowered and their success stories are shared, documented, archived and honored. The **Fly-Sister-Fly** Empowerment Breakfast promises to be a unique opportunity to share some of those stories, and to meet and network with these and other outstanding women in aviation and aerospace. Photos will be permitted. A panel discussion with the honorees will follow.

-more-

Tickets are \$55 until July 31, for anyone wishing to share this moment with these phenomenal women. Tickets may be purchased on-line at <https://www.obap.org/conventionv2/registration.asp>.

For more information about BCF, Inc. contact Sandra Campbell at scamp14469@aol.com. Inquiries about the BCF, Inc. **Fly-Sister-Fly** Empowerment Breakfast should be made to Jennifer Myers at jmyers@wearethelegacy.com or Thelma Rudd at (901) 219-7544.

- end -