

# Fly-Sister-Fly!



4<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Empowerment Breakfast

Wednesday, August 5, 2009  
Marriott Buckhead  
Atlanta, Georgia





# Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bessie Coleman Foundation, Inc Fly-Sister-Fly Empowerment Breakfast

Thank you for being part of our 4<sup>th</sup> annual Fly-Sister-Fly Empowerment Breakfast as we record new pages in history. After all, people with power write history and influence the future.

During this beautiful August morning in “Hot-Lanta” we join our hearts and minds in celebrating the accomplishments of women of color in aviation and aerospace careers. Together with our partner organizations, Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP) and Black Flight Attendants of America (BFAOA), we empower ourselves by inspiring others to pursue their dreams in aviation and beyond.

This year’s honorees are **Atlantic Southeast Airlines Captain Rachelle Jones, First Officer Stephanie Brown Grant, and flight attendants Diana Galloway and Robin Rogers, of Atlantic Southeast Airlines.** These four dynamic aviation pioneers made history on February 12, 2009, as the first all female African-American commercial flight crew to operate a commercial jet revenue flight.

Another highlight of this year’s event is our inaugural Youth Initiative Program via an Essay/prose/video contest, in which we challenged Atlanta area youth to empower themselves by engaging their creative minds in response to the slogan, “Yes—We Can!” This campaign slogan, made popular by Mr. Barack Obama during his successful run for President of the United States in 2008, inspired those who took the initiative to submit essays, poems, and video recordings of their thoughts on how Bessie Coleman’s legacy can help them to be successful leaders. It is our hope that this opportunity will influence our youth to utilize Bessie Coleman as a role model in writing their history. Yes, They Can! And we know they will!

Our board of directors and members are also excited and grateful for this unique networking opportunity which is being called the largest gathering of female aviators of color in the history of aviation. To continue the legacy and further empower all of us to influence the future by recording history, BCF member Tahira Brown (FedEx Express pilot and 2007 Fly-Sister-Fly honoree) is building a BCF database of female pilots of color. Anyone interested in participating can complete the survey instrument on the BCF, Inc. website [www.WeAreTheLegacy.com](http://www.WeAreTheLegacy.com).

We would be remiss if we did not recognize our most important purpose for this event—to keep alive the legacy of Queen Bess, famed Negro Aviatrix of the 1920’s, who was born in Atlanta, Texas, grew up in Waxahachie, Texas, worked her way to flight school in Paris, France, and on June 15, 1921, achieved her dream to fly, becoming the first African American (of record) to obtain an airplane pilot’s license and the first American citizen to earn an international pilot’s license. Bessie’s heroic efforts continue to pave the way for women and people of color around the world not to “take no for an answer” in pursuing their dreams to fly. And for that, we simply say – “Thank you, Bessie!”

And thanks to all of you for making our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Fly-Sister-Fly Empowerment Breakfast a success! We welcome your support and encourage you to become part of this legacy by joining the Bessie Coleman Foundation. See you next year!

Sincerely,

*Members and Board of Directors  
Bessie Coleman Foundation, Inc.*



## **USAF BRIGADIER GENERAL STAYCE D. HARRIS**



USAF Brigadier General Stayce D. Harris is the mobilization assistant to the Director of Strategic Plans, Requirements and Programs, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill. She serves as an adviser for force structure planning and programming as well as doctrine and requirements for the nation's airlift and refueling force.

She is a command pilot with more than 2,500 flight hours. She has flown the KC-135R, C-141B/C, T-38 and T-37 and was promoted to USAF Brigadier General on April 2, 2009. General Harris received a commission in the Air Force through the University of Southern California's Reserve Officer Training Corps program. She spent eight years on active duty and has 17 years as a Reservist. Before her current assignment she was Commander of the 459th Air Refueling Wing at Andrews AFB, Md.

Harris is the first black woman in the Air Force to assume command of a flying squadron (729<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron), thus taking her rightful place in the annals of black history. In her civilian career, she is a first officer for a major airline flying routes to Asia and Europe. She has been a member of the Bessie Coleman Foundation, Inc since 1995.

## **PEARLIS JOHNSON, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION DEPUTY REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR, SOUTHERN REGION**

Mr. Pearlis Johnson is currently the Deputy Regional Administrator for Southern Region. He has a diverse background in senior management and executive level service in both FAA and in the aviation industry. Mr. Johnson's experience in government spans over 20 years, and his private aviation industry experience exceeds nine years.

Before joining Southern Region, Mr. Johnson led international aviation regional safety goals and objectives as the Manager of the Africa Staff in FAA's Africa, Europe, and Middle East Office, Office of International Aviation. He also served as Manager of Strategic Information Communications and Evaluations for Flight Standards from 1991 to 1994 prior to his experience at a major air carrier.



Mr. Johnson left FAA to join Northwest Airlines where he held several key management positions, including Managing Director of Operations Human Resources. He returned to FAA in 2003.

## **MONIKA "MAMONA" PONTON-ARRINGTON**



When Christopher Columbus landed in what is now called Puerto Rico on November 19, 1493 he was surprised to find that the island he named San Juan Bautista was already inhabited by a Native American tribe called the Taino. Ponton-Arrington is a Boriken Taino whose family comes from Puerto Rico. She currently resides Ellijay, Georgia with her husband Fulton Arrington, a Tsalagi (Cherokee). She was given her Taino name Mamona by her grandmother. This mother of four children and two grandchildren also works as a Counselor. An advocate for Native Rights, she works to protect sacred sites in Georgia and is presently a Trustee to the Talking Rock Cherokee Memorial Cemetery. She has presented lectures before civic groups, colleges and historical societies and enjoys traditional arts.

Mrs. Monika Mamona Ponton-Arrington is the Liaison Officer responsible for The United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP) outreach in Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia.

# From Atlanta, Texas to Atlanta, Georgia!

Queen Bess Piloted the Way for the  
Atlantic Southeast Airlines Historic Crew!



Bessie Coleman circa 1921



© Atlantic Southeast Airlines

## BCF's Fly-Sister-Fly Honorees for 2009

CAPTAIN RACHELLE JONES

FIRST OFFICER STEPHANIE GRANT

FLIGHT ATTENDANT DIANA GALLOWAY

FLIGHT ATTENDANT ROBIN ROGERS

## Atlantic Southeast Airlines **CAPTAIN RACHELLE JONES**

The daughter of a single mom in the military, Capt. Jones was born in 1976 in Norfolk, Va., but in her own words, grew up “everywhere.” After spending time in Honolulu, Dallas and Naples, Italy, she graduated from South Cobb High School in Atlanta and went on to complete coursework at Georgia State University. In 2003, after working at Delta Air Lines as a Customer Service Agent for six years, Captain Jones decided to give flight school a try. “I hadn’t ever seen anyone who looked like me before who was a pilot,” she has said. “So when a friend made the suggestion, I thought, ‘I can do that!’”

In 2003, Captain Jones completed flight school at Flight Safety in Vero Beach, Fla. and went to work for Flight Safety in Atlanta. Through some savvy networking, Capt. Jones earned a position flying corporate jets for nearly a year. Her desire to fly for a commercial carrier inspired her to enroll in Flight Safety’s jet-specific training program that partners with Atlanta-based regional carrier Atlantic Southeast Airlines. After completing her jet training, Capt. Jones was hired by ASA in 2005 as a First Officer. In 2008, she became the airline’s first African American captain and one of only 10 in the nation.



## Atlantic Southeast Airlines **FIRST OFFICER STEPHANIE GRANT**



Born and raised by a single mother in Sumter, S.C., First Officer Grant is a graduate of Hampton University where she earned her Bachelor’s degree in psychology. After college, FO Grant enlisted in the Army where she was an officer for more than three years. She says she was raised during a time when “it took a village to raise a child” and credits the many strong mentors that she has had throughout her life for where she is today. No mentor was more influential than her cousin, Herman Samuels – a retired captain of American Airlines. It was with his encouragement that FO Grant took on flight school at Ari Ben Aviator School in Fort Pierce, Fla.; She made her first landing there in June 2004 and graduated in April 2007 with her instructor’s rating. After teaching others on how to fly for a short time, FO Grant was hired by Atlantic Southeast Airlines in January 2008 where she continues working toward earning her captain’s wings and becoming the airline’s second African American female captain.

## Atlantic Southeast Airlines **FLIGHT ATTENDANT DIANA GALLOWAY**

Born in Manchester, England, and raised in the Caribbean and Brooklyn, New York, Flight Attendant Diana Galloway moved to Atlanta in 1998. She first got interested in flying because she wanted to see the world. In 2000, that want became a reality when she joined Atlantic Southeast Airlines and gained the benefit of worldwide flight benefits.



Married with three children, Diana is a very proud grandmother who enjoys cooking up a storm for her family whenever she can. And when she’s not doing that, Diana is either working, flying around the world visiting relatives in far-away places, or working diligently on her first murder/mystery novel that she hopes to publish in the near future. When asked who her mentors have been, Diana is clear that there has never been a single mentor in her life, rather a continuum of highly motivated women who have achieved great things through their hard work.

## Atlantic Southeast Airlines **FLIGHT ATTENDANT ROBIN ROGERS**

Robin Rogers was born and raised in Atlanta, Ga. – the home of Atlantic Southeast Airlines. Having a mentor in an uncle who is a chemist with the CDC, Robin was always encouraged to reach for high goals and to be whatever she wanted to be through hard work. With this advice in mind, Robin earned both an associate’s degree in psychology and a bachelor’s degree in human and social services before becoming a flight attendant with ASA in 2000. Robin says she never thought of becoming a flight attendant until she met an African American man who held the position. “After talking to him, I thought: I can do that,” she has said.

Now living in Birmingham, Ala., Robin commutes to and from her Atlanta base for work. Despite the sometimes hectic schedule, she says she still enjoys her job because it allows her to meet and work with so many different, interesting people on a daily basis. When asked about being part of a history-making crew, just one word comes to mind for Robin: Spectacular!



***Welcome to Atlanta***

Mr. Pearlis Johnson  
Federal Aviation Administration Southern Region Deputy Administrator

***Spiritual Blessing and Giving***

Monika Mamona Ponton-Arrington

***Posting of Colors***

**\*\*Please Stand\*\***

Frederick Douglas High School NJROTC  
USA National Anthem sung by Derrick Thomas

***Introduction of Facilitator***

Nancy Lawrence, PhD, BCF Board of Directors

***Facilitator***

USAF Brigadier General Stayce Harris

***Introduction of “Yes, I Can” Winner***

***“Yes, I Can” Youth Initiative Overall Winner***

Presentation

***Introduction of 2009 Fly-Sister-Fly Honorees***

Atlantic Southeast Airlines Captain Rachelle Jones  
Atlantic Southeast Airlines First Officer Stephanie Grant  
Atlantic Southeast Airlines Flight Attendant Diana Galloway  
Atlantic Southeast Airlines Flight Attendant Robin Rogers

***\*\*\* Breakfast is Served\*\*\****

***BCF Pilot Solicitation***

FedEx Express Pilot Tahira Brown

***Recognition of the 2009 Fly-Sister-Fly Honorees***

BCF/OBAP/BFAOA

***Question & Answer Panel Discussion***

Brig. Gen. Stayce Harris, Facilitator

***BCF Membership Drive***

Doreen Branch

***Words from BCF Partners***

Organization of Black Airline Pilots - James Gordon, President  
Black Flight Attendants of America - Jacqueline Jacquet Williams, President

***Closing Remarks***

Thelma Rudd, BCF President

## **“Yes – I Can”**

### **The Bessie Coleman Foundation, Inc (BCF) Atlanta Youth Initiative**

BCF, Inc., presents our first “Yes, I Can!” essay/poetry/video contest. This youth initiative was for Atlanta area youth between the ages of 10 and 21. Our 44<sup>th</sup> USA president Barack Obama’s message of “Yes We Can” encourages us to understand that change comes from within. If we want change, then we must change ourselves.

The purpose of this initiative is to utilize Bessie Coleman’s legacy as a role model for students as they encounter challenges in their lives and to also especially encourage young women to pursue math and science careers. Our goal is to encourage and teach youth to set goals (hopefully with aviation in mind), to resolve conflict and to become financially savvy! In a selfless vision to promote this mission, BCF members/supporters Debora Catron, Christine Glass, Thelma Rudd and Michelle Scott visited several youth groups including Clark Atlanta University Upward Bound, Decatur NAACP, Greater Fortress Ave Baptist Church, Green Forrest Community Baptist Church, and House of Faith Prayer Ministry in late June.

Among the prizes this year were aerial “Bi-Plane Rides Over Atlanta,” admission to the Fly-Sister-Fly Empowerment Breakfast, books, and model airplanes. We could not have awarded these treasures to our young winners without your sponsorship and your help. Together we can honor Bessie Coleman’s dream of and her achievement of multicultural participation in all aspects of aviation, aerospace and other careers. YES-WE CAN!



### ***“Yes – I Can” Essay/Poem/Video Contest***

Have you ever wondered what was going through Bessie Coleman’s mind when she decided to learn to fly this new contraption called an airplane although most people around her told her that she could not do it? On June 15, 1921, the twenty-four year old Queen Bess, a beautiful, “fly”, brown skinned woman, became the first American citizen to receive an International Pilot’s license from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (F.A.I.). This license gave her authority to pilot an aircraft anywhere in the world!

- ✚ Why do you think Bessie Coleman set a goal to learn to fly an airplane?
- ✚ What goals have you set for yourself? Why?
- ✚ What would Bessie Coleman suggest that you have to start doing, or stop doing, in order to accomplish your goal?

Contest participants had to write an essay or poem or create a video that answered all of the three questions above. There was no single correct answer, so they were encouraged to be creative and think carefully about how they may be like Bessie Coleman and YES – THEY DID!

**"Because of Bessie Coleman – We have overcome that which was worse than racial barriers. We have overcome the barriers within ourselves and dared to dream!"**  
"Lieutenant William J. Powell (1897-1942)

# THANK YOU TO OUR “Yes – I Can” SPONSORS!!

## DIAMOND

Hubert L. “Hooks” Jones Chapter *Denver/Colorado Springs, Colorado*  
[www.Coloradoredetails.com](http://www.Coloradoredetails.com)



*Sponsored by chapter members, wives and widows of Original Tuskegee Airmen  
Lt Col Martha Baker, US Army Retired; Patricia Bell; Marsha Mallory-Bennett; Louise Biffle; Jeweldine Blair; Joy Clarke;  
Shirley Edwards; Pearlie Harvey; Minnie Ray Hunter;  
Anna Marie Mason; Edna Mosley; Joan Newsum; Jacquelyn Nicholson; Essie Randall*

BCF OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JACQUELINE PILOT

## GOLD

US ARMY LT COL (RETIRED) MARTHA BAKER  
TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC, HUBERT L. “HOOKS” JONES CHAPTER  
UNISON INDUSTRIES, LLC AND UNISON ENGINE COMPONENTS, INC.

## SILVER

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC, HUBERT L. “HOOKS” JONES CHAPTER  
MASONS AND EASTERN STARS  
IN MEMORY OF THELMA AND KC LOWE

STAYCE HARRIS

## PATRON

LISA SLATE

PRIDE OF THE TILLER CHAPTER 44

***SPECIAL THANKS TO:***  
*Bi-plane Rides Over Atlanta*  
*Ms. Leticia Carey as Bessie Coleman*  
*CreativeDesigns*  
*Reginald Lowe*

## **FLY- SISTER-FLY 2009 EMPOWERMENT BREAKFAST COMMITTEE**

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MICHELLE SCOTT – CO-CHAIR  
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DEBORA CATRON  
HANNAH DIXON  
NANCY LAWRENCE, PHD  
JACQUELINE PILOT  
THELMA RUDD

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**The purpose of the Bessie Coleman Foundation is to:  
“Be a major participant in promoting aviation, aerospace, and the legacy of  
Bessie Coleman so that all interested individuals may realize their full potential.”**

Please visit us online at:  
[www.WeAreTheLegacy.com](http://www.WeAreTheLegacy.com)

