



The Bessie Coleman Foundation, Inc.

- Queen Bess - An American Legacy -



Greetings of peace from Thelma Rudd!

Thank you so much for your interest in BCF and in Queen Bess' legacy. As you probably know, on June 15, 1921, the smart, beautiful, fly, Bessie Coleman - "Queen Bess", overcame the double difficulties of racial and gender discrimination in early 20th-century America and became the **first American** to earn an international pilot's license. Like many of her aeronautical contemporaries, Queen Bess was only 34 years old when she had the fatal airplane crash in Jacksonville, Florida. Despite her young age, as a result of her accomplishments, Bessie Coleman stands as not just an African-American s/hero, but as an American legacy!

It is with that knowledge that I humbly preside as the current BCF president. I bring experience as a certified enroute air traffic controller, and as former president of both the Memphis chapter of the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE) and Mid-South chapter of the Federal Women's Program (FWP).

I plan to bring a renewed focus, energy, and enthusiasm to our members, as we work together to remember and to educate others about the legacy of Bessie Coleman. Over the next two years as president of BCF, I hope many of you will work with me to:

- ✚ Ensure the financial and contractual integrity of BCF through open, truthful executive oversight and with proper, respectful coordination with the BCF Board of Directors.
- ✚ Uphold BCF member's activities as they ensure that Bessie Coleman's legacy continues.
- ✚ Increase and diversify our membership and support base:
 - We need the interest and the vision of the younger generation.
- ✚ Continue strong alliances with groups like:
 - the International Black Aerospace Council (IBAC), Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP), the Black Flight Attendants of America (BFAOA), the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE), Bennett College, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (TAI), Black Pilots of America (BPA), Women in Aviation International (WIAI), the Bessie Coleman Club of Atlanta, Texas, and others.
- ✚ Partner with schools and communities to impart meaningful life lessons to youth while capitalizing on Queen Bess' legacy:
 - Her exuberance for success will be used for conflict resolution, economics, foreign languages, goal setting and career planning! And of course – the vast careers in aeronautics!
- ✚ Create and maintain an annual "We are the Legacy Scholarship Fund":
 - Supported mainly from the sacrifice of the cost of a manicure and pedicure by every woman of color involved aeronautics from pilots to aviation web managers. This scholarship will be awarded at the annual Fly-Sister-Fly Empowerment Breakfast.

I pray that you join BCF in the recognition that "We are the Legacy" of Bessie Coleman.

It looks like a good day to fly,

Thelma L. Rudd

Thelma L. Rudd, President
Bessie Coleman Foundation, Inc.