ORGANIZATION OF BLACK AEROSPACE PROFESSIONALS
41ST ANNUAL CONVENTION & CAREER EXPOSITION

CONQUERING AEROSPACE:
OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

AUGUST 8 – 11, 2017
DISNEY’S CORONADO SPRINGS RESORT
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The diversity of our company and customers makes us stronger.

Proud to support the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals 41st Annual Convention.
fly the friendly skies.
The 41st Annual Convention and Career Exposition is all about the future: Themed, Conquering Aerospace: Opportunities for the Future, this year’s convention will explore some of the ways technology is changing the industry—starting with our Youth Luncheon, themed, Technology: Building the Way for the Future, to our Corporate Luncheon, which will host a highly-esteemed panel of industry leaders as they discuss Unmanned Aerial Systems—current and future opportunities, risk and regulations.

We’ll offer a new and more robust Collegiate Series designed to prepare our young people to transition from college to career.

Our talented Aerospace Professional Development team will be on-hand all three days to provide coaching, mentoring and ways for professionals to uplift their career.

On Youth Day, we’ll host the Tuskegee Airmen Rise Above—Red Tail Traveling Exhibit, where our middle and high school-aged students will experience the 30-seat movie theater while they learn the history of the acclaimed Tuskegee Airmen. The exhibit will be onsite all week, so please take a moment to visit it.

We’ll induct nine deserving honorees into the Hall of Fame to celebrate their impact on the aerospace industry.

And finally, we’ll host our Annual Awards Gala where we’ll recognize our 2017 scholarship recipients, our new Captains, our retirees and our OBAP award recipients.

It’s a jam-packed week, so let’s go … Welcome to the 41st Annual Convention and Career Exposition!

Lynda Gray
Editorial Director

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Dear Friends, Members, and Sponsors,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals, it is my honor to personally welcome each of you to OBAP’s 41st Annual Convention and Career Exposition. Proudly, the 2017 OBAP convention theme is –

“CONQUERING AEROSPACE: OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE”

The emergence of aviation began over a century ago with an idea – the idea that man could fly. Examples of steady progression of that idea are demonstrated by men landing on the moon, men and women executing air travel as Captains and as Astronauts conducting space exploration. All of which has led to ground-breaking aerospace pioneering achievements such as the creation and adaptation of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) into commercial applications, commercial airspace and military operations.

As the technologies and dynamics of the aerospace and aviation culture transform and expand, we as industry thought leaders and stakeholders must continue to prioritize and promote noteworthy education for ourselves and most importantly, our youth, to be significant contributors in the aerospace industries.

To further the OBAP Mission to INSPIRE EXCELLENCE: Support, Transform, Educate, and Mentor, OBAP aerospace ‘Subject Matter Experts’ through participation as presenters at career days in schools and serving as Directors of OBAP ACE Academies and flight academies nationwide, are leading the charge to teach our youth and to create the next generation of aerospace professionals. Our programs under Project Aerospace continue to build upon an already significant foundation within the aerospace community that began over 40 years ago.

Through this year’s thought-provoking and energizing convention schedule, attendees will be completely immersed in the OBAP Vision, “To commit to the realization of an aerospace industry in which all individuals have equal opportunities to expansive careers.” Convention activities include but not limited to:

- Aerospace Professional Development Program (APDP)
- Aviation Consortium Breakfast
- Collegiate Master Series
- Collegiate Series Workshop
- Youth Workshop
- Youth Luncheon
- Founders & Pioneers Breakfast
- OBAP Annual Awards Gala
- OBAP Career Fair
- OBAP Corporate Luncheon
- OBAP Hall of Fame Inductions
- FAA Career Workshop

Because of your unwavering belief in the comprehensive national OBAP programs and initiatives, I sincerely wish to thank OBAP leadership, members, staff and volunteers for your dedicated service. Each year our annual convention has grown. We continue to establish new initiatives to best serve our members, we seek opportunities to honor those who have paved our way, and we continue to develop invaluable alliances with corporate partners and sponsors. Your invaluable support of the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals cannot be overstated.

I thank you for assisting OBAP in continuing the legacy and embracing our value…41 years later!

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail”
~Ralph Waldo Emerson~

Sincerely,

Vanessa Jamison
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At 180,000 strong we too are a force to be reckoned with. Find your place with us and watch your career soar.

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KEEP SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS.

JetBlue is a proud supporter of the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals.
Dear Friends:

As Governor, it is my pleasure to welcome the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals to Florida for your 41st Annual Convention and Career Exposition.

The people of Florida are proud to be your host, and we look forward to showcasing the hospitality that makes the Sunshine State the world’s top travel destination. Florida has experienced record numbers of visitors during each of the past six years, which is great news for Florida families.

As you enjoy Florida’s friendly businesses, numerous attractions, and scenic beauty, I invite you to learn more about what we are doing to make Florida first for business and job creation. To help ensure businesses in our state succeed, we are focused on cutting taxes and diversifying our economy, and Florida’s hardworking businesses have created more than 1.37 million jobs since December 2010.

You have my best wishes for a memorable and enjoyable convention, and I hope each of you will visit Florida often.

Sincerely,

Rick Scott
Governor
August 9, 2017

Welcome! On behalf of the City of Orlando, it is my pleasure to welcome the 41st Black Aerospace Professionals Annual Convention and Career Exposition to the City Beautiful.

Your conference is set in the heart and soul of Central Florida. From a bustling center of commerce boasting a diverse set of industries, to its fine restaurants, first-rate hotels, awe inspiring art galleries, museums and more; Orlando has so much to offer everyone who lives, works, plays, learns or raises a family in Central Florida.

Since I took office in 2003, reshaping Orlando into a modern, metropolitan city has been a shared priority for our entire Central Florida community. I challenged our residents to imagine a great city, reborn and revitalized. We have made incredible progress in just a few, short years.

I invite you to explore Downtown Orlando during your visit. Our Downtown is currently experiencing a cultural arts-and-entertainment renaissance through the development of three state-of-the-art community venues, the new Amway Center, a world-class performing arts center and an upgraded Camping World Stadium. Downtown is also home to a new Major League Soccer stadium for our Orlando City Lions. These modern, competitive cultural arts, entertainment and sports venues will serve as the cornerstone for our region for generations to come.

As new residents and visitors flow into Orlando, we’re acting now to make sure it’s even easier and more convenient to get around. I invite you to try LYMMO, our free Downtown circulator with a wide range of business, cultural and entertainment facilities along the routes. We also have SunRail, our new commuter rail system that links our Downtown to other areas in Central Florida.

Orlando’s warm and sunny weather also makes Orlando perfect for enjoying outdoor activities year-round. Our region offers abundant parks and recreation facilities where you can enjoy biking, boating, kayaking, fishing and hiking. Beaches are less than a one-hour drive from Orlando.

Orlando offers a winning combination of economic, cultural, educational opportunities and an incredibly high quality of life for residents and visitors. Again, welcome to Orlando and best wishes for a successful conference.

Sincerely,

Buddy Dyer
Mayor

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Yes, the aviation field has position openings in all of these disciplines. It’s not just about pilots. Everyone is familiar with stories of the pilot shortages in the industry, but who has heard anything about the job openings for dispatchers, marketing executives, trainers and graphic designers that are offered by airlines, private businesses, and governing agencies such as the Federal Aviation Administration?

The following stories are of men and women whose career achievements in the airline industry highlight the wide diversity of job categories that can be found.

Mary Wooden

“There’s the bug of aviation, and then there’s the bug of flying,” Mary Wooden answered when asked about when she got “the bug.” As she explained it, some people love working in the aviation industry, but not necessarily as a pilot.

Mary is a Senior Analyst of Flight Operations Risk Management at United Airlines. Her department is responsible for ensuring that the airline is regulatory compliant with FAR 117 (Flightcrew Member Duty and Rest Requirements.) Her responsibilities include working with the FAA to make certain that there are programs in place within United to manage fatigue risk. It’s called fatigue risk, because as she notes, “You can’t ever eliminate fatigue.”

One of the ways in which the United program manages risk is by fatigue reporting. When pilots identify a potentially tiring situation such as a long commute to a hotel during short layovers, it is noted in reports so that the situation can be addressed.

Fatigue review committees examine other duty time incidents, such as extensive flight delays caused by bad weather. A pilot that has a five-hour flight ahead of him may not feel that he is able to safely operate a plane after being stuck at an airport for many hours.

For ultra-long-haul flights that exceed FAA regulations, such as San Francisco to Singapore, Mary’s department makes sure that the crews are well rested. They do so by putting beds on planes, using noise-dampening curtains, and outfitting the flight with more than one crew so that pilots can rest while other pilots are flying the plane.

In 2007 Mary joined OBAP and received the first two scholarships that were open to non-pilots. “And that would be the Edward Horne Scholarship,” Mary enthused. “You had to have a private pilot’s license, but you didn’t have to be a professional pilot. I also received the Wings Financial Scholarship, which they graciously both continue to offer to OBAP.”

Mary has always concentrated on the aviation field. Her degrees are in aviation management and airline management, but the position that she holds at United didn’t even exist before 2014, when the FAR117 regulation was initiated.

“My flying bug, I did it initially because it was another credential. But when I started flying, I realized the need. The perception of people in management is that they’re sitting in an ivory tower, making decisions about personnel on the front line and they don’t have any experience. I wanted people to understand that I know what it’s like out there. You’re dealing with the weather, the elements, like I’ve been there, done that. I’m not going to make a decision that will make it more difficult to do your job.”

Mary now volunteers for the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), conducting search and rescue missions, or as she calls it, ‘low and slow flying.’ She has even earned her seaplane rating, so that she can take-off and land on water.

“That’s when I really got the bug, this isn’t just a credential any more, it’s really something that I enjoy doing,” she observed.

Tonika Johnson

Initially, Tonika Johnson did not know of the position that she currently holds at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA.) Her inspiration to become a pilot came through her parents and grandfather. She and her sister were exposed to aviation at a young age while flying regularly as Trans World Airlines unaccompanied minors.

Tonika went to college, earned her pilot credentials, and was later employed as an instructor and by domestic and foreign air carriers. This enabled her to be eligible for her position as a Front Line Manager for the FAA.

“Being a part of the FAA was a natural progression for me,” said Tonika. “Throughout my flying career, I had a glimpse of the FAA’s responsibilities. I became fully aware of the various opportunities that were available to employees once I joined the Administration.”

Tonika started out as an intern for the aviation division of the Illinois Department of Transportation and TWA. Every year in college, during summers and Christmas breaks, she interned. She then decided to join the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and learn to fly.
"But even at that time, I did not have enough knowledge to decide that I would like to come work for the FAA dealing with risk-based decision management. I did not know anyone that could tell me that information," Tonika remarked.

She is with the APDP (Professional Pilot Development Program) and has been an OBAP member since 1992. At that time she didn't know any FAA employees that were OBAP members who could discuss FAA opportunities.

According to Tonika, the FAA and the National Coalition of Black Federal Aviation Employees does outreach now, participating in job fairs and career days at schools.

"I live in South Florida, There are three aviation high schools, and those students learn about different opportunities in the industry. There's also a bridge program that's in the works for students to attend a local college. They can train in different areas and some colleges even have a flow-through program with companies such as Jet Blue and American Airlines. At present, businesses and the FAA are collaborating with colleges to provide internships, too. There is now a flow-through system for non-pilot opportunities," she observed.

Tonika's current responsibilities as Front Line Manager for the FAA encompass a wide range of duties; from overseeing employees who conduct surveillance to ensuring that employees receive the training appropriate to their jobs. She evaluates employees and is a part of the National Centralized Hiring Team for the FAA. Tonika ensures that personnel execute their daily assignments in accordance with FAA policy and guidance.

Jelani Smith

In 2016, Jelani Smith received the UPS Flight Dispatcher Scholarship through OBAP. He is currently enrolled at Ohio State University as an aviation flight major with a minor in aviation management.

Jelani is scheduling his last of three stage checks before his final check ride to secure a private pilot license. He also finished the ground school course to secure his instrument rating and, with the support of family and friends, Jelani recently enlisted in the Air National Guard where he hopes to become a pilot. With the support of OBAP and the scholarship awarded by UPS, Jelani is now poised for a thriving career in aviation.

In his own words, Jelani stated "I've met many professionals who have positively oriented me for the future! At the OBAP Convention in Chicago I learned a lot of things that will stick with me forever and gained the momentum I needed just after high school graduation to continue pursuing a career that would better myself. Going to the OBAP Convention allowed me to meet successful people that had similar foundations to myself which let me know that a lot of the things I wanted to do career-wise are actually possible. And at this point I know I'll overcome any obstacle to get where I want to be in the future thanks to OBAP. I also hope that my future includes flying for UPS!"

Jonathan Strickland

Jonathan Strickland is a First Officer at United Parcel Service, hired on March 9th, 2017. As first officer, he is responsible for the safe, on-time and efficient operations of the UPS aircraft.

"OBAP sponsored me for a private pilot check ride about 7 or 8 years ago," Jonathan said when asked about the organization's importance in helping him to obtain his position in the aviation industry. "So they didn't sponsor the whole training, but for parts of it. I was a student in the ACE Academy in LA for 2 or 3 summers and then volunteered as a mentor, so I've sat on both sides of the table."

A program in LA called Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum offers children the opportunity to perform community service in exchange for free flight lessons. As a sponsor of the after school program, OBAP provided the flight lessons to Jonathan. "I got the aviation bug around 3 or 4. None of the family is in the aviation industry. My grandmother traveled quite a bit and she took me along with her on commercial flights. Every time I went, the more interested I got," he explained.

Jonathan never wanted to be anything other than a pilot. He graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and has worked for two airlines before UPS, one of which was Air Transport International, a worldwide cargo company where he flew overseas extensively.

Jonathan believes that most students know about job opportunities within the aviation industry. He maintains that a lot of people, especially people within the OBAP organization, have made it a point to emphasize that there are other things to do beside fly the airplane.

"At the conventions, you can see it," Jonathan said. "They have the airline booths, but they also have the air traffic control, test and maintenance, and engineers. I was happy to see how the mentorship pays off within OBAP. All the years of hard work I've put in and the opportunity that UPS has given me to work for the company."

(continued on next page)
Rob Strickland

Rob Strickland, Senior Manager of Human Factors and Pilot Development at United Airlines, enjoys an intriguing mission that spans ergonomics, crew resource management, and computer user interface. As Rob described it, “Human Factors is a broad field that fundamentally deals with the man/machine or man/equipment interface. As designers are going forward, developing high-end aircraft, automobiles, computers, or even tennis shoes, they have to take into account the limitations and preferences of the user. Everything from the metrics associated with the size and length of a person’s limbs, and how far they can reach, say within a jet fighter, to the G’s they can take, to how their feet flex when they are running in high performance tennis shoes.”

Rob worked with Boeing as they were developing the electronic checklist for the 777 for which United was the launch customer, but now is more involved in training flight crews. He is responsible for the nine-day, introductory pilot training course for new hires, as well as the training program for new instructors and evaluators at United’s Flight Training Center in Denver.

“Pilots come to us fully qualified to fly their previous equipment but we take them through and familiarize them with our standard operating procedures, the technical requirements, the crew resource management model that they’re going to be intimately familiar with before they get released to the line and our corporate culture,” Rob explained. “As our captains transition from being a co-pilot or first officer, to being a captain in the left seat, I am responsible for a course that provides the inspirational tools for those transitioning flight officers to fully embrace their command responsibilities. It’s more of a leadership-centered curriculum.”

Rob did not know that his particular position existed but he was made aware of the field of Human Factors when he was in college at the Air Force Academy. He was advised by his academic advisor to go into it because it was relatively new and the Air Force was beginning to embrace Human Factors in the design of equipment as well as in the training of their crews in order to enhance safety and prevent accidents.

He went into the field thinking that he would be more involved on the engineering and design side of Human Factors, but ultimately ended up more in the crew coordination procedures-oriented side, which he loves. He believes that it’s a good combination of working with people and working with systems.

The fact that his position is in the aviation industry is perhaps the most attractive part of the job to Rob. The aviation industry in general has been in his blood since he was 9 years old, when his baseball team won a championship and his coach, who happened to be a private pilot, took them all up in an airplane. He thought, “This is something I want to be a part of.”

Also, his father, Bob Strickland, a retired air force veteran and aeronautics enthusiast, recognized in the early 90s that aviation was a great tool to encourage interest in science, technology, engineering, and math among minority and “hard-to-reach” youth. He formed Airway Science for Kids, Inc. (ASK), which provides elementary through high school students unique opportunities to learn in-depth aeronautical principals and apply them in simulated – and actual – flight experiences. Young people are introduced to the various STEM academic and career pathways available to them by career professionals, educators, mentors, and volunteers. Although his father passed away in 2008, the program continues to grow, indicating a healthy appetite among young people for a variety of aviation-related careers.

Rob didn’t work directly with OBAP when he was seeking his current position, but he knew that in the early and mid 90s OBAP was very active in raising awareness within the minority community and within the aviation industry about opportunities that the business offered. He believes that OBAP’s proactive efforts to raise awareness did have a direct influence on the aviation industry and United Airlines in particular.

“I think the aviation field, whether it’s on the military or civilian side, it’s kind of a microcosm of our society in general. Whatever you have an appetite for, whether it’s technical, whether it’s service-oriented, there’s a place for you in aviation,” Rob observed.

He estimated that there are probably 40 different job groups that are responsible for getting an aircraft from point A to point B, 2,600 times a day. That translates into multiple opportunities for anyone who has an appetite for aviation but may not want to be on the flight deck: maintenance, crew scheduling, looking at fatigue risk-management, dispatch, aircraft routers, hotel scheduling, chefs.

“This is a great time to be in the aviation industry, which is projected to hire nearly 350,000 mechanics, pilots, flight attendants, air traffic controllers, program managers, and customer service representatives over the next 5 years,” Rob maintained. “OBAP is well positioned to influence the landscape of that hiring pool through a campaign to introduce the wide variety of aviation opportunities to a highly diverse group of potential career candidates.”

Camelia Barkley

“Actually, the funny thing is, originally I wanted to be a lawyer,” Camelia Barkley admitted. “I never wanted to do aviation until my mom actually told me, ‘You should just try it.’ And I went flying the first time and I was like, ‘I think I want to do this now.’ They call it catching the bug.”

Camelia is an International Aircraft Dispatcher for United Airlines. She is responsible for the pre-flight planning, monitoring and the cancellation of flights. Pre-flight planning consists of monitoring factors such as weather, performance, and aircraft systems. According to her, dispatchers are pretty much the first point of contact if something happens while a passenger plane is in the air. The flight crew contacts the dispatcher first with any mechanical issues, in which case the dispatcher calls in their technical team to fix the problem.

If a passenger is ill, the dispatcher will contact United’s on-call physician, or if there is a weather problem, dispatchers notify the pilots. If air traffic control puts the aircraft in a holding pattern, a dispatcher helps to determine whether or not the plane has enough fuel to reach a suitable airport – one that will accommodate not only the plane, but the passengers as well.

Camelia said that dispatchers must be 23 years of age, have completed at minimum, an eight week dispatching course and pass an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) test in order to receive a dispatcher’s license, although she also noted that in order to be competitive and land a job with one of the majors, you should have your degree.

“OBAP was instrumental in introducing aviation to me. I was in an ACE Academy and in 2002 there was another camp that I went to and it was at the University of North Dakota. At that time, that was when Northwest was still open, and their pilots came down and interviewed us and set us up.”

“Students don’t know about the many types of jobs available in the industry and the reason I say that is because last year when I was talking to some students, and they asked me what I did, they had no idea that we existed, Camelia observed. “I mean, they know about pilots and they know about engineers, they know about mechanics, flight attendants, and about ground workers, (aircraft marshalls) but they don’t know about our profession.”

Camelia currently serves as one of the collegiate chairs and will be at the 2017 OBAP convention.

This is a great time to be in the aviation industry—which is projected to hire nearly 350,000 mechanics, pilots, flight attendants, air traffic controllers, program managers, and customer service representatives over the next 5 years.

—Rob Strickland
At any point in time, anywhere in the world, there are people who decide to do the unthinkable and break through barriers.

They become the first of their gender, race, or nation to test their courage and go beyond what others think is possible. They are trailblazers, with no guides to help them negotiate the lonely places that they have chosen to explore.

When we look back at their achievements, we marvel at their resolve, their capacity to persevere, even in the face of repeated setbacks. Hearing the stories of their struggles helps to give us the determination that we need to achieve our goals. And it reminds us that nothing worthwhile is gained without endeavor. That reminder is their legacy to us and to future generations.

The best way to honor our pioneers in black aviation is to keep telling their stories—to older generations as a reminder, and to young people as an inspiration.

Dr. Aprille J. Ericsson was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1963 and raised in the Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn. Living in one of the Roosevelt House projects on Dekalb Avenue she was bussed to P.S. 199 elementary school and then attended Marine Park Junior High School, where she scored in the 90's on all of her regent and citywide exams. In junior high she won second place in the science fair, played on the girl’s basketball team and was a member of the science club, honors club and school band.

Although Aprille passed all entrance exams for New York’s technical high schools, she chose to move to Cambridge, Massachusetts to live with her grandparents and attend the Cambridge School of Weston. In high school she participated in both citywide and intramural softball and basketball leagues, while earning high scholastic honors. She was also accepted into the rigorous academic enrichment program, UNITE (now known as the Minority Introduction to Engineering, Entrepreneurship and Science or MITE.)

Dr. Aprille Ericsson graduated high school with top honors and attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where she was involved in several research projects with the applied Physics Laboratory that included the development of a fiber optic laser gyroscope, and the creation of a database for EVA neutral buoyancy data calculated at the NASA Johnson Space Center.

After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical/Astronautical Engineering at MIT, Dr. Ericsson attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. She became the first African-American woman to receive a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering at Howard University and the first female African-American to receive a doctorate in engineering from the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.

Discussing her internship at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center during school, Dr. Ericsson explained how she was offered a full time position there after obtaining her Ph.D., “That’s how I did it. Once you get your foot in the door and meet people, you can show them that you are capable of doing the type of work that’s done here.”

Her many honors include: The Women’s Network, Top 18 Women Who Will Change the World; Women in Science and Engineering for Engineering Achievement; National Technical Association, Top 50 Minority Women in Science and Engineering, 1996-97; NASA representative to the White House; and most recently in 2016, the Prestigious Washington Award.

Despite the disappointment of not becoming an astronaut because of asthma and a knee injury, Dr. Aprille Ericsson has had an illustrious career as an aerospace engineer at NASA Goddard and is currently the Goddard manager of a federal program enabling small businesses, in collaboration with universities, to compete for technological opportunities that solve R&D challenges.
Edward Dwight, Jr. has had an amazing number of successful careers: Air Force Test Pilot, America’s First African American Astronaut Candidate, IBM Computer Systems Engineer, Aviation Consultant, Restaurantier, Real Estate Developer, Construction Entrepreneur and he has excelled in all of them.

Born in 1933, in Kansas City, Kansas, Ed dreamed of becoming an artist, but instead he left home in 1953 to join the U.S. Air Force where he served as a fighter pilot. He later earned a B.S. in Aeronautical Engineering from Arizona State University and in 1961 was chosen by President John F. Kennedy to train as an experimental test pilot, preparatory to becoming an astronaut candidate. In 1962, after completing the Test Pilot Training Program, at Edwards Air Force Base, Dwight began Aerospace Research Pilot Training, becoming the first African American astronaut candidate. As a result, he was featured on the covers of Ebony and Jet magazines as well as many news magazines worldwide.

Ed Dwight maintains that the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963 was the reason that he was never chosen to join the astronaut corps. He persevered in an environment that was dominated by white, male test pilots but finally resigned from the program in 1966, having never gone into space.

The multi-talented Dwight then worked as an engineer and marketing representative at IBM, became an aviation consultant for a firm in Dallas, and in 1970 founded Dwight Development Associates, Inc., that made him one of the larger real estate development and construction companies in Denver. In 1974, although having no formal art training, he returned to his abiding passion for art and won a commission to create a sculpture that would portray George Brown, Colorado’s first black Lt. Governor.

He was then commissioned to design a series of 50 bronzes entitled “Black Frontier in the American West” to commemorate Colorado's centennial. The series of sculptures illustrating the contributions to the opening of the West by black explorers, pioneers, farmers and soldiers gained critical acclaim and was on exhibit throughout the United States for years.

In 1977 Dwight earned a Masters of Fine Arts degree in at the University of Denver where he learned to operate the university’s metal casting foundry. He then established the Ed Dwight Studios, Inc. in Denver, Colorado. The 70 bronzes that he later created with the National Park Service depicted the evolution of Jazz, from its African roots to jazz greats such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald.

Dwight credits his engineering background in helping him to translate his artistic visions into monumental bronze sculptures including International Monuments to the Underground Railroad, in Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario; the Black Patriots Memorial on the mall in Washington, D.C.: the Alex Haley-Kunta Kinte Memorial in Annapolis, Maryland and the Quincy Jones Sculpture Park in Chicago, Illinois.

Other major works of Ed Dwight’s are on permanent display at the Smithsonian Institute.

Luke Joseph Weathers, Jr., Lt. Col. USAF, was an aviation pioneer in war, in peace and in industry. He built his legacy as a hero and a trailblazer shortly after attending Xavier University in New Orleans from 1939 to 1942. After enlisting in an experimental training program for African-American pilots in Tuskegee, Alabama, he began active duty in 1943 as a fighter pilot flying P-51 Mustangs and P-39 Airacobras. His 302nd Fighter Squadron later merged with the 332nd division, both known as the “Red Tails” which reflected the pilots’ practice of painting the tails of their planes red.

Weathers’ wartime service included missions in North Africa, Italy, France and Germany that earned him a Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with seven Oak Leaf Clusters, the American Theater Ribbon and a WWII Victory Medal. While on escort service he never lost a bomber to enemy action, successfully shot down a German fighter when attacked by a group of eight, and later survived being downed over Greece while yet making it safely back to his unit with the aid of local villagers.

Lt. Col. Weathers returned to his hometown of Memphis after active service and was instrumental in the integration of local establishments including his own church, St. Theresa Little Flower Catholic Church. He began his long career with the FAA in 1960 as an air traffic specialist in Anchorage, Alaska. In 1965 he returned to his hometown and became the FAA’s first African-American air traffic specialist in Memphis. Follow-up postings included the Southern Regional Office in Atlanta and also as a communications specialist at FAA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He retired in 1985.

In 2007 Lt. Col. (Ret) Weathers received the Congressional Gold Medal along with 300 of the original Tuskegee Airmen. He passed away in 2011 at the age of 90 and now rests at Arlington National Cemetery.
Theresa M. Claiborne, Lt. Col. USAF, didn’t set out to be a trailblazer. An ROTC fly-along in a T-37 trainer was all it took to set her on that path. She immediately knew what she wanted to do with her career. She happened to become a pioneer along the way.

Her mother told her “You have to be twice as good” to overcome the barriers and inequalities she would face at times in her life. Theresa listened and applied the principle. She focused on the tasks at hand rather than on the obstacles before her. Typically, when her high school offered no girls sports teams, she played on the boys’ soccer squad. And when the nearest Air Force ROTC program was at Berkeley in the Bay Area, she made a weekly 180-mile round trip to complete the course work that would lead to her commissioning as a second lieutenant.

Pilot training at Laughlin AFB was challenging for everyone. On top of that, she was one of the very few African-American female candidates and, she recalls with a chuckle, “I was short to boot.” Theresa experienced some self-doubts “because I made my share of mistakes,” but her instructors “were outstanding” and guided her through “the hardest thing I had ever done.”

Upon earning her wings in 1982, Lt. Theresa M. Claiborne became the first African-American female pilot in the United States Air Force. Until an ROTC colleague called her to tell her she was closing in on a major achievement, she was unaware of it—and was sorry for the additional pressure.

Her military service continued with training for the huge refueling planes dubbed “stratotankers” and during seven active duty years plus thirteen in the reserves, she flew the massive KC-135s. During the early 90s Theresa flew missions during Operation Desert Shield and in the mid-90s flew over the Balkans during the Yugoslavian Civil War.

In 1990 Theresa was hired by United Airlines and joined select company: African-American pilots were a small group; African-American female pilots were an even smaller group. “Over the years, younger pilots have said to me ‘Thank you so much, Theresa, for paving the way,’ and that warms my heart. I always thank them, but then I remind them that it’s up to them to continue to clear the path for the young people behind them.”

The heritage of black women pilots includes Bessie Coleman, who flew over the mountains of France; Willa Brown, the first black female to obtain a commercial pilot’s license; Patrice Clark-Washington, who became the first black woman Captain of a major airline; and Theresa M. Claiborne, the first African-American female pilot in the USAF.
The Leading Edge of Legacy: Being First to Accept the Challenge, our theme for the 2017 Pioneer Awards. Each of our recipients is being celebrated for having the courage, the resilience and the tenacity to be first against all odds.

Among our group of honorees, we celebrate the first African-American civil servant female to receive a Ph.D. in Engineering at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, America’s first African-American astronaut candidate, the first African-American air traffic specialist and the first African-American female pilot in the United States Air Force. These accomplishments merely skim the surface of their esteemed careers.

We are also honored to induct our 2011 Pioneer Award recipients who include one of the first African-American B52 pilots, one of the first African-American UPS pilots, the Founder of the Airways Science Program at Delaware State University, a historically black college, the first African-American pilot hired by Altair Airlines and the B747-400 Captain who flew the first revenue flight for UPS.

Each of these history-making individuals have placed their indelible mark on the aviation industry and we are honored to celebrate each of them. We salute them and we are proud to present the 2017 Hall of Fame honorees.

Dr. Aprille Joy Ericsson
Edward Joseph Dwight, Jr.
Captain Theresa M. Claiborne
Captain Robert Brown
Captain Lawrence Anthony Parker, Jr.
Daniel E. Coons, Ph.D.
Lieutenant Colonel Edgar V. Lewis
Captain Aaron J. Gould
During her 25+ year tenure with NASA, Dr. Aprille Joy Ericsson has held numerous positions. In 2017, Dr. Ericsson assumed the position of New Business Lead for the NASA GSFC Instrument Systems and Technology Division. Most recently, she served as the Capture Manager for a proposed Astrophysics mid-sized Class Explorer, called STAR-X. Prior to that proposal development, Dr. Ericsson served as the GSFC Program Manager for SBIR/STTR.

Formerly, she served as the Deputy to the Chief Technologist for the Applied Engineering and Technology Directorate. As an Attitude Control Systems analyst, Dr. Ericsson developed practical control methods, and analyzed structural dynamics for several space science missions. She served as a NASA HQs Program Executive for Earth Science, and a Business Executive for Space Science. As an Instrument Project Manager she has led spaceflight instrument teams and proposal developments.

Dr. Ericsson's graduate school research at Howard University was developing control methods for orbiting large space platforms like ISS. She has served as an Adjunct Faculty member at several universities. Currently, she sits on Technical Academic boards at the National Academies, MIT and previously at Howard University as a Trustee.

Dr. Ericsson has won numerous awards. The most prestigious was “The 2016 Washington Award” from the Western Society of Engineers.

Dr. Ericsson is the first female to receive a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from Howard University, and the first African-American civil servant female to receive a Ph.D. in Engineering at NASA GSFC. She received her B.S. in Aeronautical/Astronautical Engineering from MIT.
Edward Joseph Dwight, Jr.
OBAP Founders and Pioneers Hall of Fame 2017 Inductee

Ed Dwight is a man whose resume reads: Former Air Force test pilot, and America’s first Black Astronaut candidate, IBM Systems Engineer, Civil Aviation consultant, executive pilot, Real Estate and construction entrepreneur, and restauranteur can best be described as a true renaissance man. Ed Dwight has succeeded in all those areas. For the last 36 years, however, Ed has focused his direction singularly on art endeavors. Since his serious art career began in 1978, Dwight has become one of the most prolific and insightful sculptors in America.

Born in Kansas City, Ed left to join the U.S. Air Force in 1953. After pilot training, Ed obtained a degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Arizona State University and served as an officer and pilot. In 1961, Ed was chosen by President John Kennedy to enter the Air Force’s Experimental Test Pilot School, as a prerequisite to becoming America’s first Black Astronaut. Unfortunately, the assassination of President Kennedy terminated any chance for Dwight to go into space. In 1966, after fourteen years in the military, Ed left the Air Force.

Ed rekindled his initial love for art, and in 1977 earned a Masters Degree in Fine Arts (MFA) from the University of Denver. In 1974, the State of Colorado offered Ed a commission to create a series of bronzes entitled “Black Frontier Spirit in the American West” to honor the contributions of African Americans in settling the American frontier.

In 1980, Ed received his first large scale commission of Frederick Douglass from the National Park Service. Since then Ed has created over 128 Monuments, Memorials & Public Art installations around the U.S. depicting the contributions of African Americans to America’s landscape. Recent Memorials include an Underground Railroad Memorial in downtown Paterson, NJ; a memorial to Medgar Evers on the Alcorn University Campus in Mississippi, the Denmark Vesey Memorial for the City of Charleston, SC; a Memorial to Thaddeus Tate, an early Black Pioneer, for the City of Charlotte, SC.

Ed Dwight Studios, Inc. operates a 30,000 sq.ft. studio/gallery and foundry as is one of the largest single artist production and marketing facilities in the Western U.S. Ed Dwight is a true and dedicated Renaissance man.
Captain Theresa M. Claiborne
OBAP Founders and Pioneers Hall of Fame 2017 Inductee

Theresa was born on May 25, 1959 to Morris Claiborne Sr. and Dorothy Claiborne in Emporia, Virginia. As a military dependent, she traveled the world. She graduated with honors from Elk Grove Sr. High School and attended California State University of Sacramento where she majored in Media Communications with a minor in Journalism. She also attended the University of California at Berkeley for Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC). On June 20, 1981, she was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Air Force.

She attended Undergraduate Pilot Training at Laughlin AFB, TX and graduated on September 16, 1982, Class 82-08 as the FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE PILOT in the USAF. Theresa served on active duty for seven years at Castle Air Force Base in California and Loring Air Force Base in Maine, flying the KC-135A aircraft. She left active duty in September 1988 and joined the USAF Reserve on the day after her active duty commitment ended. She reported to the 940th ARW at Mather Air Force Base in California, where she served as both an instructor pilot on the KC-135E and a flight commander. She was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on November 1, 2001. Ms. Claiborne retired on January 6, 2003, as a Major, a command and instructor pilot with over 3000 military flight hours.

On January 15, 1990, Theresa took off on another mission in her life. She joined United Airlines as a pilot on a Boeing 727. She has since been qualified and flown a Boeing 737, 757, and 767. She is currently flying a Boeing 747-400 to Asia and Europe and has accumulated a total of over 15,000 civilian flying hours. She is one of 14 African American female pilots at United Airlines.

Theresa has received numerous awards, both civilian and military. Some of them include: Tuskegee Airmen Award of Merit – 1983, Western Region Tuskegee Airmen Award “Those Who Make It Possible” – 1984, “Wendell O Pruitt Award” – 1985. A few of her military awards include the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and the Southwest Asia Campaign Medal (Persian Gulf).

Theresa has been featured in numerous national publications including Ebony, Jet, and Essence Magazines. She is an accomplished public/motivational speaker and has spoken across the nation. She has been featured on several documentaries about women in aviation and can be seen on the “Black Americans In Flight” mural at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.

“My mother always told me, ‘You have to be twice as good.’ That’s why I was always so hard on myself,” Theresa says. “You have to be twice as good. It’s a phrase that many African Americans heard as children, foreshadowing the inequality that they were likely to face at some point in their lives. Theresa used that as her motivation to not only flourish over her 26-plus year career at United, but also in becoming the first African American woman pilot in the United States Air Force.

OBAP Founders and Pioneers Hall of Fame 2017 Inductee

Lieutenant Colonel Luke J. Weathers, Jr. the only child born to Jessie and Luke J. Weathers, Sr. in Grenada, MS, on December 16, 1920. In 1925, the Weathers family would reunite in Memphis, after the elder Weathers had previously moved to establish, own and operate the first African American grocery store with his uncle William “Bill” Weathers. Luke Jr., would later graduate from Booker T. Washington, Class of 1939, where he was an exceptional football player but nevertheless no sports opportunities were available beyond that Memphis football field. After high school he attended Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana to pursue an education for a career in the medicine field, but due to unforeseen circumstances he returned to Memphis were the dream in the medicine field would be short lived. However, he continued his education at Lane College in Jackson, TN.

Luke’s life would change forever when he discovered a newspaper from another city where he read an article about the Tuskegee Project. Luke researched and vigorously pursued the opportunity to be a part of a program that launched African American men in military aviation. Luke’s mother, Jessie Weathers, was “the help” for a prominent Memphis which ultimately lead him to a meeting in the Mayor’s office where the Mayor of Memphis, literally, called the White House in his presence and told them he was sending Luke to the project. He went to Tuskegee and against all odds, trained and succeeded, to become one of the famed members of the Tuskegee 302nd Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group – also known as the “Red Tails” where he toured France, Germany, Italy and Africa. He earned The Distinguished Flying Cross, Seven Oak Leaf Clusters, American Theater Ribbon and WWII Victory Medal. In 2007, he would receive the Congressional Gold Medal with his other living counterparts.

Upon returning to the United States Luke, Jr. became the first African American to receive the key to the City of Memphis and a parade on Beale Street which was held in his honor where 80,000 were in attendance. Luke would go on to become owner and operator of a flight school and he established a tailoring school under the Vocational Rehabilitation program in Jackson, TN. Luke Jr. also established the first ROTC program in the state of Tennessee at Manassas High School in Memphis. His professional career would land him in Alaska in 1960 to join the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). He later returned to the FAA Memphis Flight Service Station in 1945 to become the first African American air traffic specialist. His FAA career would span over a 25 year period from Memphis to Atlanta and ultimately to Washington, DC where he retired in 1985 after experiencing the air-traffic controllers (atc) strike under President Ronald Reagan which led to a record number of atc workers were terminated.

After retirement, Mr. Weathers remained active in aviation by promoting equality for women in the military and aviation. He was a member of the West Coast Tuskegee Airman Chapter and remained loyal until his death as a member of the Phoenix Arizona Chapter.

Lieutenant Colonel Luke J. Weathers Jr. earned his final wings October 15, 2011 and was finally laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery on January 21, 2012, the release day of the movie “Red Tails” in which he was depicted. Lieutenant Colonel. Luke J. Weathers Jr. was a distinguished man and left a legacy in aviation built on his high school motto, “We Lead and Others Follow.”
Captain Robert "Bob" Brown retired from UPS Airlines after 21 years as an Assistant Chief Pilot/Check Airman having flown the B727, B757 and the B767 aircraft. Bob was a pioneer in starting the airline for UPS, joining the ranks when it was primarily a ground distribution company.

During his career from 1988–2009, Bob played a significant role in establishing training, policies and procedures that became the foundation for the success of the airline today. As a trusted colleague, he became well known for providing advice and counsel to his fellow employees that has led to many successful careers at UPS.


Bob's desire to ensure the success of others in aviation became his passion and he joined the Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP) in 1986. Having served for several years as a dedicated member, his belief in the mission of the organization led him to seek others to join him. His passion led him to continue mentoring many professionals in the organization.

His dedication is further highlighted by his role as a volunteer, serving the past twelve years in senior leadership roles as President, a member of the Board of Directors, Vice Chair and Chair of the Board of Directors. Through his engagement with OBAP and beyond, Bob will continue his commitment to community service and building a sustainable pipeline of young professional talent for the aerospace industry.
“Larry” is a graduate of the Embry Riddle University with a B.S. in Professional Aeronautics. Because of Larry’s love of flying he started his aviation career as a TWA flight attendant in 1973 through 1978. During his time with TWA he obtained his flight certificates and ratings to become qualified as a pilot.

Larry was hired as a Line Pilot at Altair Airlines in 1978. He was selected for the Beech 99 and served as a Captain on the Beach 99 aircraft. Larry also flew the Nord262 and the Folker 28 aircraft.

In 1982, Larry was hired as a Line Pilot at People Express. While at People Express he served as a B727 Captain, simulator instructor, and company recruiter. In, 1986 Continental Airlines acquired People Express where he continued as a B727 Captain.

Larry was hired at UPS in 1988 as a flight qualified supervisor. He was selected for a technical interviewer for pilot hiring where he assisted in hiring the first 800 pilots at UPS. Later he served as a B727 fleet supervisor, a Captain Line Check-Airman and Instructor.

In 1992, he transitioned to the B747 classic fleet where he served as a simulator instructor and as a Captain Line Check-Airman.

In 1994, Larry was promoted to manager and has held a variety of assignments including B747 classic Fleet Training Manager and Fleet Chief Pilot. After transitioning to the A300 Fleet in 2009. In Larry’s most recent position he served as the A300 Fleet Standards and Training Manager for UPS Airlines.

Larry has held the position of national vice president for the Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP) for two terms and a dedicated member for over 39 years. He has helped mentor young prospective pilots to be successful in the airline industry. In 1994, Larry founded the Shawnee High School/OBAP Summer Aviation Camp, sometimes called ACE Camp Academy, in Louisville, KY. ACE Academy is a program designed to offer middle and high school students an introduction to the aviation industry and aviation careers.

Larry retired from UPS in 2017.
Dr. Daniel E. Coons was raised in Stamford, NY and graduated from Stamford Central School. He attended Champlain College before receiving his Bachelor’s degree from Harper College (SUNY Binghamton). He received his Master’s degree and Doctorate of Education from the State University of New York at Albany.

He served in the US Army overseas during the Korean War era. Upon returning to the states, he taught history and coached football from 1958 to 1968 at Cooperstown (NY) Central School where he was beloved by his students. It was as a teacher and mentor that Dan found his true calling.

He went on to teach at the State University College at Oneonta before moving to Dover, Delaware to take a position as Director of Libraries and Learning Resources at Delaware State University.

In 1987, Dan combined his love of teaching with his passion for flying and founded the Airway Science Department at Delaware State University. He continued to serve as the aviation program director until retiring for the first time in 1992.

Following this retirement, he moved to Cairo, Egypt for two years, where he worked through a USAID grant to oversee the construction of the Egyptian National Agricultural Library. Upon completion of the project, he returned to chair the aviation department at Del State from 1995–1997 and continued part time until 2006.

In 2003, he was honored by Kent County as an educator of distinction. He was a founding member of the Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame, who honored him with induction to the Hall in 2011.

In 2011, he was recognized by the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) for his contributions to the education of black pilots.

He was honored by the Tuskegee Airmen with the first Lemuel E Curtis Award for his service to minority pilots. He served as president of the Kent County (DE) Chapter of the Korean War Vets for several years.

Daniel E. Coons, passed away at his home on May 3rd, 2017.
Lieutenant Colonel Edgar V. Lewis
OBAP Founders and Pioneers Hall of Fame 2017 Inductee

Edgar V. Lewis attended Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia for two years, but didn’t make enough money during his summer employment to return for his junior year. Money was tight so he joined the Air Force on July 13, 1949 to take advantage of the G.I. Bill.

He told them he wanted to train in electronics, but was told those career fields were not open to people like him. He insisted and became an Electronic Specialist, graduated as a fighter pilot flying the B47 and one of the first African American pilots to fly the B52, and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. After 23 years of service, he retired from the Air Force as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Lewis went to work for the Federal Aviation Administration where he held several positions over the course of his 22-year tenure including, Aviation Operations Inspector, responsible for the certification of airline pilots, Regional Air Transportation Resource Specialist and Assistant Manager of Operations in the Flight Standards District Office. Lewis served as FAA liaison to Eastern Airlines during the modification of its operations.

At the time of his retirement from the FAA, Lewis was serving as Manager of Operations Branch, Southern Region, responsible for the review of all airline training programs and certification in the Southern Region. Lewis was the first African American Manager at the regional level for the FAA.
Captain Aaron J. Gould  
OBAP Founders and Pioneers Hall of Fame 2017 Inductee

Captain Aaron J. Gould flew for UPS for more than 30 years and served as a Boeing 747-400 Captain. Prior to joining UPS, Captain Gould flew for Evergreen International Airlines and was hired in 1986 by International Parcel Express (IPX).

In 1987 UPS acquired full ownership of IPX from DHL to create its own cargo airline service. On February 1, 1988, Captain Bob Travelute, then First Officer Aaron Gould and Flight Engineer Dick Purcell flew the first revenue flight for UPS.

Gould joined the Organization of Black Airline Pilots in 1985 and served four years on the Board of Directors and nine years as Chairman of the Professional Pilot Development Program. As Chair of this program, he provided mentorship, scholarships and job placement for pilots pursuing an aviation career. Captain Gould is extremely proud of the numerous young men and women who have benefited from this program.
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Michelle Brown
2017 Honoree

Michelle grew up in Ironton, Ohio, a small town on the Ohio River. Her mom was a corrections officer and her father, a sales executive for an oil company. Her grandmother had migrated from Birmingham, AL with a second grade education, and stressed the importance of hitting the books. Brown was class president and used her bowling skills to win a scholarship to Duke University, where she studied economics. Growing up in a town where fewer than 20% of residents had college degrees, she was a hometown hero.

After competing her bachelors at Duke, she attended the University of Michigan’s Stephen M. Ross School of Business. As a new Michigan MBA grad, she went to Bain & Company in 2007 as a consultant. Realizing her potential, United Airlines invited her to join their leadership team in 2010, just prior to the merger with Continental Airlines. Initially she directed the frequent-flier program, MileagePlus before moving to operations as a Managing Director in 2015. In her current role, she oversees gate agents, baggage handlers, tow teams, and all associated planning organizations.

Today, Michelle is the highest-ranking African-American female operations executive at United. She was recently honored in 2016 by inclusion in Crain’s Chicago Business’ prestigious “40 under 40.”
Patricia G. Murphy was the first African American flight attendant hired by Delta Air Lines in June 1966 during the civil rights movement. After submitting many resumes to various airlines, Delta was the only airline that responded. Patricia retired from Delta in November of 2001.
Isaura Arcie Quintana was born in Los Angeles, California. She attended both California State University, Los Angeles and San Jose State University. She simultaneously earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Science and her Certified Flight Instructor license.

Soon after, she was hired at JetWest Aviation in Van Nuys Airport, California, as their first and only female pilot. At JetWest she flew various actors and musicians in Learjets to build turbine engine time and became rated as Pilot in Command of these aircraft.

A couple of years later, Isaura became the first female pilot to fly MD-90s for Great American Airways and Sunjet Aviation. These companies dissolved and she actively pursued a pilot position at Northwest Airlines.

In 1997, she joined Northwest Airlines and proudly became the first Latin female pilot on staff. She eagerly sought experience piloting a diverse array of Northwest Airlines fleet (747, 319/320, 757 & 767). She is presently flying the Boeing 757 & 767 for Delta Airlines.
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OBAP Board Chair

OBAP Board Chair Vanessa Blacknall-Jamison has over 39 years of professional aviation experience with 28 of those as a supervisor, manager and human resources specialist.

Currently, Vanessa is with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Flight Stands (AFS) Leadership Development Team – Leadership Coach (ACC) and Change Management Advisor (CMA).

Vanessa is a certified business coach responsible for coaching senior executives and managers as a CMA. Vanessa supports Change Management Practitioners on various project teams in integrating change management activities into their project plans.

She is a graduate of the FAA Nation Program for Emerging Leaders (PEL) and the Southwest Region LEAD Program (Leadership Enhancement and Development Program). She has served on OBAP’s Board of Directors as Vice Chair and board member since 1990. Vanessa received honorary membership with OBAP for her years of service with the organization.

Vanessa continues to serve on other aviation-related organizations’ Board of Directors. She holds a M.B.A. – University of Phoenix and B.A. – University of Southern California. She is a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

She and her husband of 32 years, Tony Jamison, have two adult children, Mikiala and Anthony (Bryce). She is the proud grand-puppy-parent to ‘Red’ and ‘William’. Vanessa makes her home in Aurora, Colorado.

Mrs. Carole Hopson
ExpressJet
OBAP Vice Chair

Carole Hopson is a professional pilot, and works as a flight instructor in Morristown, NJ.

Aviation had always been her passion, so she pursued flying as a second career, while raising her family. Although aviation is her current vocation, previously she spent seven years as the Vice President/Director for Training & Development of Foot Locker stores. There, she headed up executive-level leadership coaching, as well as store associate training, creating original product knowledge videos and sales training for over 140,000 associates.

She began her career as a police reporter and has worked for the Bergen Record and The Philadelphia Inquirer. She has also held executive-level positions with the National Football League and L’Oreal Cosmetics.

Mrs. Hopson graduated from Columbia University in 1990, with a Masters of Science degree in Journalism, and she holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Virginia. While at Virginia, she majored in Spanish Literature.

Carole and husband, Michael Hopson, have two sons, Joshua and Coleman, and they make their home in Montclair, New Jersey.

First Officer Donald Gardner
United Airlines
OBAP Secretary, Chair – Communications & Marketing

Donald Gardner has been passionate about aviation since he was a small child. Born in Dallas, Texas in 1985, he had the opportunity to travel the country at a young age and it was during this time he became fascinated with flying.

During his senior year of high school, he obtained his Private Pilot’s License and chose to attend Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida in order to pursue his dream of becoming an airline pilot. During his four years at Embry-Riddle, Donald had the opportunity to be exposed to what he loves: aviation and flying. In May 2007 he graduated Cum Laude from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Science.

Donald also began his airline career in 2007 and gained experience with several regional carriers including Comair Airlines, Mesaba Airlines and Compass Airlines. He recently joined United Airlines as a First Officer on the Boeing 757 and 767. Donald is currently pursuing his Master’s Degree in Aviation Safety and Human Factors.

He enjoys exposing the youth of tomorrow to the career opportunities available in aviation. He truly realizes the sky is the limit when it comes to things you can achieve in life as he would eventually like to become the CEO, or Director of Flight Operations, or Chief Pilot for a major airline carrier. Donald resides in St. Paul, Minnesota and enjoys traveling, reading, photography, watching sports and listening to Jazz music when he’s not in the flight deck.

First Officer Randall Rochon
United Airlines
OBAP Director, Chair – Governance

Randall Rochon is a First Officer for United Airlines, based in NYC and has been involved with OBAP since 1999. During his time with the organization he has gained lifetime friends, established new relationships, and have a good understanding.

He is a founding member of a student organization at his alma mater - Western Michigan University. Randall has worked with several ACE academies. He is the ACE Academy Director at Western Michigan, the Project Aerospace Director for the Virgin Islands and recently co-directed the first NYC ACE program this past summer. He is a strong supporter of the Pilots in schools program.

The relationships I have gained from OBAP is a huge part of my career success and it is my belief, that by observing and learning from the past and current leadership of organization, that I have built a foundation and passion within myself to take the reins as secretary and help ensure that our legacy continues on.

OBAP AEROSPACE PROFESSIONAL NEWS
In 1976, Rod moved to Memphis, TN, where he continued to participate in sports and learned to play trumpet. In 1978, he and his parents finally moved back to Atlanta. Once back on familiar turf, Rod renewed old friendships. He continued to play on various sports teams, and joined several instrumental ensembles, both in his church and at his high school alma mater, Benjamin E. Mays and consistently made the honor roll. It was at Mays high school that one of his classmates shared what he had done over a weekend. He said that he completed his first solo flight. When Rod inquired about how he had the opportunity to fly, his classmate shared that his father was an instructor pilot. Ironically, Rod had always been interested in aviation due to his experiences traveling back and forth between various cities over the years. When his family settled into their new neighborhood, Rod was pleasantly surprised to learn that three of his neighbors were airline pilots for major carriers. This factor along with the interaction with his classmate set the stage for the rest of his professional career. He began taking private flight lessons from his classmate’s father, at seventeen years of age which ultimately prepared him for the eventual challenges that launched him to the next level of aviation.

After graduating high school, he accepted a band scholarship and an eventual Naval ROTC scholarship to attend Morris Brown College. While at Morris Brown, Rod played in the Marching Wolverine Band, was sophomore class Vice-President, Junior Class President, R.O.T.C. Band Commander and in his senior year, Student Government Association President.

Rod graduated from Morris Brown and received his commission, as an officer in the US Navy. He was also selected and received a navy flight school assignment in Pensacola, FL. After successful completion of flight school, he was assigned to the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, CA. It should be noted that Rod was the first student from Morris Brown College and the Atlanta University Center that would earn Naval Aviation Wings, as a pilot from the Naval ROTC program.

Rod spent seven years flying the T-34c, T-44 and the P-3 Orion. He was awarded Flight Instructor of the Year and opted to transition out of the Navy to more lucrative pastures in the civilian aviation world. He was hired by United Parcel Service (UPS) in 1994 as a flight engineer (B-727), upgraded to first officer (B-757/767) in 1995 and later upgraded to Captain on the Boeing 757/767 in 2001. In 2006 he transitioned to the Boeing MD-11. In 2010, Rod transitioned to the B-747-400 and is currently flying as Captain on that aircraft.

In 2010, Rod accepted the position of Scholarship Committee Chairman of the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP), formerly known as the Organization of Black Airline Pilots. To date, his committee has awarded over five-hundred thousand dollars worth of scholarships to deserving aviation professionals and students. In 2015, as his last official duty as chairman, Rod’s efforts resulted in the organization acquiring an additional ten-thousand dollars from the United Parcel Service Foundation.

Xavier was commissioned an Ensign in the Navy in October 1996 after completing Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Pensacola, Florida and was designated a Naval Aviator in August 1998. Following Fleet Replacement Training in Oklahoma City (VQ-7), his first squadron tour was in Fleet Reconnaissance Squadron Four (VQ-4) where he flew E-6 TACAMO (B-707) as an Aircraft Commander and Functional Check Pilot. Early in his Navy career wanted to reach out to his community and show younger students that they can pursue and achieve their dreams. While there in Oklahoma City he visited numerous schools speaking on the importance of staying in school and perseverance against the odds.

Next, Xavier returned to Pensacola in 2002, where he began his Navy career, but this time as an Instructor Pilot in Training Squadron Ten (VT-10), flying the venerable T-44 Turbo-mentor and also as a husband and father. He continued his community service efforts in Pensacola also, helping to revive the local chapter of the National Naval Officers Association, which mentors and recruits minorities to the sea services. He also participated in a number of air shows where he was able to speak with children about aviation and reaching for their goals. This was also the time he became active in the Organization of Black Airline Pilots (OBAP) as the regional director for the Pensacola area. After a successful tour in VT-10, he decided to leave the Navy and pursue his lifelong dream to be an airline pilot.

In July 2005 he joined the Continental Airlines team, where he has served as a First Officer on the Boeing 737, 757, 767, 777 and is currently a First Officer on the Dreamliner 787 aircraft. Since moving to Houston he has become very involved in revitalizing the southwest region of the renamed Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP), trying to assist whenever and wherever he can. He served as Regional Vice President and Convention Chairman for OBAP in 2007. When asked to step in as Convention Chairman, Xavier did not hesitate to assume the role. “I just want to do whatever I can to make a positive difference.”

Xavier joined the Brotherhood of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. in 1996 and has been member of the 100 Black Men of Metropolitan Houston, the Houston Area Urban League Young Professionals and the National Sales Network for 3 years and fostered partnerships for OBAP in the Pilots and Professionals In Schools program in Houston, pairing pilots with other business professionals to visit local area Houston schools. Since its inception the volunteers have reached approximately 100,000 students. Xavier can be reached at xsamuels@obap.org
Wi-Fi is available in many areas throughout our Resorts including Guest rooms, main lobbies and main pools. (Coverage may vary.)

Smoking areas located outside of all buildings in marked locations.

Service animal relief areas located in grassy areas adjacent to parking lots.
## 41st Annual Convention and Career Exposition

**AUGUST 8–11, 2017**

**DISNEY’S CORONADO SPRINGS RESORT, WALT DISNEY WORLD® RESORT, LAKE BUENA VISTA, FL**

### CONVENTION SCHEDULE – DAYS 1 & 2

#### DAY 1 – TUESDAY, AUGUST 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
<th>END</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>BCAL Leadership Academy</strong></td>
<td>Fiesta 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitated by Nancy Lawrence, Ph.D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Exhibits Career Fair Exhibitor Setup</strong></td>
<td>Veracruz C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>9:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Registration</strong></td>
<td>South Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>7:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>Board Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Fiesta 9</td>
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#### DAY 2 – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9

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<tr>
<td>7:00 AM</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Registration</strong></td>
<td>South Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td><strong>APDP Professional Development and Hiring Symposium</strong></td>
<td>Fiesta 5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sponsored by American Airlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Career Development Interview Room</strong></td>
<td>Fiesta 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td><strong>Exhibitor Breakfast—Invitation Only</strong></td>
<td>Veracruz C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>The Tuskegee Airmen Rise Above—Red Tail Traveling Exhibit</strong></td>
<td>Veracruz Porte Cochere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td><strong>General Membership Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Fiesta 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>11:45 AM</td>
<td><strong>Collegiate Series—Welcome and Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Monterey 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>11:15 AM</td>
<td><strong>Career Fair Opening Ceremony</strong></td>
<td>Veracruz C Entrance</td>
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<td>11:15 AM</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Exhibits Career Fair</strong></td>
<td>Veracruz C</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>APDP Professional Development Series—Coaching &amp; Mentoring</strong></td>
<td>Fiesta 2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Sponsored by American Airlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>Collegiate Series—How to Market Yourself</strong></td>
<td>Monterey 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
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<td><strong>FedEx Experience</strong></td>
<td>Coronado AB</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Board of Directors &amp; Advisors Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Fiesta 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 PM</td>
<td>3:15 PM</td>
<td><strong>Collegiate Series—Effective Resume and Cover Letter Writing</strong></td>
<td>Monterey 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitated by Amy Kienast, Director of Career Services, MIAT College of Technology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>APDP Professional Development Series—Coaching &amp; Mentoring</strong></td>
<td>Fiesta 2–3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sponsored by American Airlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 PM</td>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>Collegiate Series—Meet and Greet with OBAP Regional Directors</strong></td>
<td>Monterey 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Collegiate Series—Visit the Career Fair</strong></td>
<td>Veracruz C</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>9:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Welcome Reception</strong></td>
<td>Monterey 1–3</td>
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## DAY 3 – THURSDAY, AUGUST 10

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>7:00 AM</td>
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<td>Registration</td>
<td>South Registration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 7:30 AM    | 9:00 AM   | **APDP Professional Development Series**  
Sponsored by American Airlines | Fiesta 5                        |
| 8:00 AM    | 10:00 AM  | **Collegiate Series—Networking for Your Career**                         | Fiesta 2                        |
| 8:00 AM    | 5:00 PM   | **Career Development Interview Room**                                    | Fiesta 8                        |
| 8:00 AM    | 10:00 AM  | **Founders & Pioneers Breakfast—The Leading Edge of Legacy: Being First to Accept the Challenge**  
Sponsored by JetBlue | Fiesta 6                        |
| 9:00 AM    | 6:00 PM   | **Career Fair**                                                          | Veracruz C                      |
| 9:00 AM    | 11:00 AM  | **Youth Workshop Experiential Learning**  
Presented by the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) | Durango 1                       |
| 9:00 AM    | 11:00 AM  | **Youth Workshop Experiential Learning**  
Presented by the NASA Community Engagement Team | Coronado EF                     |
| 9:00 AM    | 11:00 AM  | **Youth Workshop Experiential Learning**  
Presented by the United States Air Force | Coronado D                      |
| 9:00 AM    | 5:00 PM   | **Youth Workshop Experiential Learning**  
The Tuskegee Airmen Rise Above—Red Tail Traveling Exhibit | Veracruz Porte Cochere         |
| 9:45 AM    | 12:00 PM  | **Professional Development Session—Understanding FAR Part 117**  
Presented by the Federal Aviation Administration | Fiesta 7                        |
| 10:00 AM   | 6:00 PM   | **FedEx Experience**                                                     | Coronado AB                     |
| 10:15 AM   | 11:45 AM  | **Collegiate Series Workshop—Techniques for High Performance Under Pressure**  
Facilitated by Rob Strickland, Sr.—Manager, Human Factors and Pilot Development, United Airlines | Fiesta 2                        |
| 12:00 PM   | 1:30 PM   | **Youth Luncheon—Technology: Building the Way for the Future**  
Sponsored by FedEx Express | Fiesta 6                        |
| 1:30 PM    | 3:00 PM   | **Collegiate Series Workshop—are you Ready? The Interview and the Application Process** | Fiesta 2                        |
| 2:00 PM    | 4:00 PM   | **Professional Development Session—Aviation Safety Inspector Recruitment Workshop**  
Presented by The Federal Aviation Administration | Monterey 2–3                    |
<p>| 3:00 PM    | 4:15 PM   | <strong>Collegiate Series Workshop—FedEx Experience</strong>                          | Coronado AB                     |
| 4:00 PM    | 5:30 PM   | <strong>Collegiate Series—Visit the Career Fair</strong>                             | Veracruz C                      |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START</th>
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<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 AM</td>
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<td>Registration</td>
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<td>7:15 AM</td>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Aviation Consortium Breakfast</td>
<td>Fiesta 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 AM</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>APDP Professional Development Coaching</td>
<td>Fiesta 2–3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
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<td>Program Directors Meeting</td>
<td>Fiesta 1</td>
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<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>The Tuskegee Airmen Rise Above—Red Tail Traveling Exhibit</td>
<td>Veracruz Porte Cochere</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Career Fair</td>
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<td>9:00 AM</td>
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<td>Career Development Interview Room</td>
<td>Fiesta 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
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<td>Collegiate Series—Smart Money!</td>
<td>Yucatan 3</td>
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<td>FedEx Experience</td>
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<td>VIP Meet and Greet—Invitation Only</td>
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<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>Collegiate Series—Career Fair Access</td>
<td>Veracruz C</td>
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<td>11:30 AM</td>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>Corporate Luncheon and Industry Symposium—Unmanned Aerial Systems</td>
<td>Fiesta 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>3:30 PM</td>
<td>The Collegiate Masters Series—Panel Discussion—OBAP is Committed to Your Success</td>
<td>Yucatan 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>Board of Directors and Board of Advisors Joint Meeting</td>
<td>Fiesta 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Southwest Regional Caucus</td>
<td>Fiesta 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Midwest Regional Caucus</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>West Regional Caucus</td>
<td>Monterrey 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Southeast Regional Caucus</td>
<td>Monterrey 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Northeast Regional Caucus</td>
<td>Monterrey 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:45 PM</td>
<td>Executive Leadership Reception—Invitation Only</td>
<td>Monterrey 1–3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:45 PM</td>
<td>Gala Reception</td>
<td>Yucatan 1–3, Pre-Function Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>1:00 AM</td>
<td>OBAP Annual Awards Gala</td>
<td>Fiesta 6</td>
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—Schedule subject to change—
## Exhibitor Locations

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<tr>
<th>EXHIBITOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Air Cargo Carriers, LLC</td>
<td>418</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air Wisconsin</td>
<td>217</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska Airlines/Virgin America</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allegiant</td>
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<td>ALPA</td>
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<td>American Airlines</td>
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<td>American Airlines Credit Union</td>
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<td>California University</td>
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<td>CommutAir</td>
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<td>Compass Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University</td>
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<td>Emirates Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>Envoy Airlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Jet Management</td>
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<td>ExpressJet Airlines</td>
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<td>Federal Aviation Administration/Department of Transportation</td>
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<td>Flight Safety International</td>
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<td>GoJet Airlines</td>
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<td>Hawaiian Air</td>
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<td>Horizon Air</td>
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<td>JetBlue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalitta Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent State University - College of Aeronautics and Engineering</td>
<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Gay Pilots Association (NGPA)</td>
<td>123</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBAP Marketplace</td>
<td>309</td>
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<tr>
<td>Omni Air</td>
<td>115</td>
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<td>OSM Aviation Management AS</td>
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<td>Plane Sense</td>
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<td>Sun Country</td>
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<td>TMC Jets</td>
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<td>Trans States Airlines</td>
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<td>US Air Force and Air Force Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Army National Guard</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walmart Aviation</td>
<td>315</td>
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<td>Western Michigan University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wings Financial Credit Union</td>
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<td>XOJet</td>
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</table>

### Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort – Veracruz C

- **Exhibition Break Area**
- Cyber Cafe
- Service Center
- Tables
- Entrances
- Exit
- Holding Area

**Dates:** August 8–11, 2017

**Location:** Disney's Coronado Springs Resort, Walt Disney World Resort, Lake Buena Vista, FL
**Effective Resume and Cover Letter Writing**

*Facilitated by Amy Kienast, Director of Career Services at MIAT College of Technology*

A step-by-step review of effective resume writings, tools to use for success within diverse aerospace careers and a complimentary resume review provided by Amy Kienast.

**Amy Kienast**

Amy Kienast is a native of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, holds a Bachelor’s of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and is completing her Master’s of Science degree in Technology Studies at Eastern Michigan University. She holds a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) Certification and a Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) Certification.

Positions she has held within the Aviation industry include Airline Technical Recruiter, Airline Corporate Recruiting Manager, National Director of Business Relations, and currently Director of Career Services at MIAT College of Technology in Canton, Michigan.

Her areas of expertise are networking, recruiting, business-education relations, career search skills, and workforce planning.

She is a board member for the Aviation Technician Education Council (ATEC), Co-founder and Past President of Yankee Ladies (Women in Aviation International Chapter), and a member and volunteer of numerous aviation organizations.

**Techniques for High Performance Under Pressure**

*Facilitated by Rob Strickland, Sr. Manager, Human Factors & Pilot Development, United Airlines*

Rob Strickland will conduct a 75-minute training session highlighting the effects of stress on college students. Through this interactive presentation, Rob will reveal tips and techniques for high performance under pressure as well as the reduction and management of stress. Rob will provide a unique insight into how high performers think, and what you can do to create a healthy approach to your educational, professional, and personal endeavors.

**Rob Strickland**

Rob Strickland is Senior Manager of Human Factors and Pilot Development at United Airlines. He graduated from the United States Air Force Academy with a B.S. in Human Factors and remains active with the Academy’s Human Factors programs.

In the Air Force, Rob accumulated thousands of hours as a combat crewmember on the KC-135, conducting worldwide air refueling mission in multiple theatres of operation. He also taught aviation at the Air Force Academy, directed leadership development programs, and coached the Academy boxing team to 3 national championships. At United, Rob worked on the initial cadre for the B777, consulted with Boeing to deliver the first airline customizable electronic checklist, and wrote the very first operational flight manual for the Triple Seven. He is now responsible for new hire pilot, captain upgrade, instructor/evaluator, and CRM training at the airline. Rob also consults with United’s Flight Safety division on CRM/TEM related incidents. Rob has delivered Human Factors and CRM presentations outside of the aviation industry to PJM (an electric industry leader), the Oil Companies International Marine Forum, and firefighting groups.

For the past 25 years, Rob has spent much of his free time training athletes, coaching boxers, and conducting self-defense classes for airline pilots. He’s earned multiple personal training, life coaching, and self-defense certifications. Rob is also a long-time participating member of the Human Factors and Ergonomics society. He is married with 4 children.
**SPEAKER PROFILES (CONTINUED)**

**COLLEGIATE SERIES**

Friday, August 11  
9:00 am – 10:30 am, Yucatan 3  

**Smart Money!**  
Facilitated by Delicia Smalls  

*Learn how to save, find, manage and maintain fiscal responsibility as you embark on an exciting career.*

**Delicia Smalls**

Delicia Smalls lives true to her favorite quote from Anais Nin, “And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” And it’s the same drive of that philosophy she looks for in all her clients. Having first-hand experience from the pre-mature death of her husband, Dr. Vincent Smalls, Delicia knows what it’s like when risk, or complacency, of staying in your current position outweighs the risk of the pain and hard work it takes to overcome your situation.

This first-hand experience and being a client of Ashford Advisors herself, is what led her to seek a role with the firm. She wants the opportunity to help others the way Ashford helped her because she couldn’t imagine what life would have been like since 2011, when her husband passed, if they hadn’t been properly prepared for that risk.

She also understands that her unimaginable can be and are other’s imaginable and their reality. So, she makes it her mission to also help those people get back on their feet and back into a position moving forward towards a more successful future.

Delicia’s career began in the field of Dentistry, Public Health, and Entrepreneurship. She is the owner of 3 Smalls LLC, which operates as a certified Georgia Minority Entity.

She has worked as a dental hygienist for over 15 years and co-owned two dental practices in metro Atlanta. Delicia is also an inventor with two inventions that are currently patent pending.

Currently, Delicia lives in the newly established Metropolitan Atlanta city of South Fulton with her two boys Dylan (13) and Ethan (9). Her boys are her pride and joy both already excelling at playing football, baseball, basketball, tennis as well as the viola.

When Delicia is not working, she enjoys kickboxing, watching MMA fights, and running.

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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES**

Thursday, August 10  
9:45 am – 12:00 pm, Fiesta 7  

**Understanding FAR Part 117**  
Facilitated by Tonika Johnson, FAA  

**Tonika Johnson**

Tonika is employed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). She is a Frontline Manager at the South Florida Certificate Management Office. Prior to joining the FAA, she was a pilot for domestic and foreign air carriers and a high-profile celebrity. After joining the FAA, Tonika became dual qualified in air carrier and general aviation.

Today, Tonika leads a team of air carrier inspectors that provide surveillance to airlines and cargo stakeholders. She serves as a team lead for new and internal FAA inspector hiring and is involved with various programs within the FAA.

In addition to her day to day duties, Tonika serves as mentor for aspiring aviators and is involved with several aviation education outreach programs.

She has received numerous awards such as the Flight Standards Division Southern Region Aviation Inspector of the Year for her service and commitment to aviation.

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CORPORATE LUNCHEON AND INDUSTRY SYMPOSIUM

Friday, August 11
11:30 am – 1:30 pm, Fiesta 6

Unmanned Aerial Systems—current and future opportunities, risk, and regulations.

Sponsored by UPS
Moderated by Captain Houston Mills

Captain Houston Mills

As Global Aviation Strategy & Public Policy Director, Captain Mills advocates for federal aviation policy and collaborates with domestic and international industry groups to harmonize aviation safety standards and sustainability rules. He is also responsible for aggregating aviation strategy issues under one umbrella within UPS to help maximize safety and reliability for the company, as well as service to UPS's growing global customer base.

Prior to his current position, Houston served as UPS's Director of Airline Safety and Compliance where he was responsible for ensuring safe and regulatory compliant Flight, Maintenance, and Ground support operations, Emergency Response preparedness, and interaction with government regulatory and safety organizations worldwide. Under his leadership UPS became one of the first U.S. airlines to have a certified Safety Management System (SMS). He also served as the UPS International Chief Pilot, where he was responsible for crew-related international flight operation activity and as the Director of Flight Training where he was responsible for the UPS Advance Qualification Program (AQP) for all crewmembers.

Houston most recently was appointed to serve as one of 35 executives on the newly formed FAA Drone Advisory Committee, where he brings an airline and pilot perspective to a group of other transportation and technology leaders as they explore policy considerations for unmanned aerial systems (UAS) integration into the National Air Space system. He also serves as the vice-chair of the Airlines for America (A4A) Safety Council and on the UPS corporate Unmanned Systems and Lithium Battery Steering committees.

A native of Indianapolis, Houston received a bachelor's in English literature from Wabash College and an MBA from Webster University. He also holds a Professional Human Resources designation.

Houston began his aviation career in 1985 as a Marine Corps officer and F/A-18 fighter pilot where he was certified as an air combat tactics instructor (ACTI). He served the United States in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Restore Hope and Southern Watch. He has more than 100 aircraft carrier landings to his credit. He has previously served as an FAA designated check airman and is currently an international qualified Captain on the Boeing 757/767.

(continued on next page)
In step with UPS’s commitment to the community, Houston serves on the national Board of Directors of the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, the board of trustees for the Lincoln Foundation of Louisville, and is president of the Marine Corps Coordinating Council. Married and the father of three, Houston particularly enjoys motivational speaking, golf, and has coached various youth sports for many years.

Martin Gomez

Martin Gomez is the Director of Aeronautical Platforms at Facebook, where he leads all UAV development. Prior to Facebook, Mr. Gomez worked for 20 years at Aurora Flight Sciences Corporation, working in such positions as VTOL X-Plane Chief Engineer, and Program Manager and Chief Engineer on the Centaur Optionally Piloted Aircraft. Mr. Gomez has also served as Chief Engineer for DARPA’s Vulture program, a long-endurance solar powered airplane, DARPA’s OAV-II program, a VTOL ducted-fan aircraft intended to provide an organic company-level ISR capability, and Excalibur, a VTOL jet tactical UCAV developed for the US Army. He has over 30 years of professional experience. In 2016, Mr. Gomez was appointed to the FAA’s Drone Advisory Committee. Mr. Gomez is a commercial pilot with single-engine, multi-engine, glider, and instrument ratings and over 1500 hours of experience, speaks English, Spanish, and French fluently, and is learning German.


Richard D. Hanson

Rich Hanson currently serves as the President and CEO of the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) headquartered in Muncie, IN. He previously served as AMA’s Government and Regulatory Affairs Director from May 2008, until taking office as president in January 2017, and prior to that served on the AMA Executive Council for 15 years as a member of the Academy’s board of directors. Rich is an aviation professional with a 50-yr career in full-scale aviation and over 7,000 hours as a commercial pilot in airplanes and rotorcraft. He is a Vietnam veteran, having served 27 years in the US Army and the Army Guard and Reserve components. During his military career and as a commission officer Rich served in numerous military aviation leadership positions and is a graduate of the Army Aviation Safety Officer Course.

Rich also worked 26 years as an air rescue helicopter pilot, a commissioned peace office and a public safety administrator for the Arizona Department of Public Safety. Rich managed Arizona’s Governor’s Office for Highway Safety for two years and served one year under special assignment to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration assisting in the development of NHTSA/IACPs and medium businesses, and expand global disaster risk reduction.

In this role, he oversees partner relationships, program development and operational execution to enhance the supply chain capabilities of UPS’s humanitarian relief partners. He manages The UPS Foundation’s groundbreaking partnership initiative with GAVI, the vaccine alliance, and Zipline, to launch the world’s first National Medical Drone Network in Rwanda. He also oversees the UPS Humanitarian Experts on Mission Program, to help strengthen humanitarian supply chains by embedding expert UPS supply chain volunteers with leading relief agencies for 6 months or longer. Over the past 10 years, Joe has coordinated UPS’s engagement in the Logistics Emergency Team (LET) program to help the U.N. World Food Programme and Global Logistics Cluster prepare for and respond to global crises. UPS has deployed more than 20 skilled volunteers and provided urgent logistics services across the globe including: Indonesia (2007), Myanmar (2008), Haiti (2008), Philippines (2009), Padang (2009), Haiti (2010), Pakistan (2010), Japan, Horn of Africa, Nigeria (2011), Sahel Region of Africa (2012), Philippines, West Africa (2013 and 2014), Nepal (2015), Japan, Ecuador (2016) and Peru (2017).

Joe also oversees The UPS Foundation’s efforts to strengthen community resilience, enhance disaster preparedness for small and medium businesses, and expand global disaster risk reduction.

Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program. In his last seven years at the Department of Public Safety Rich served as the Aviation Division Commander over Arizona’s statewide fleet of fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

Rich is a life-long modeler and has years of experience in all aspects of aeromodeling and unmanned aircraft. He is an AMA Fellow, an inductee to AMA’s Model Aviation Hall of Fame and was recently awarded the Paul Tissandier Diploma by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) for his contributions to model aviation and the aeromodeling community.

The Academy of Model Aeronautics is the world’s largest aeromodeling organization. Founded in 1936, the AMA has grown to more than 180,000 members with nearly 2,400 chartered clubs located in all 50 states, the US territories and at US military installations around the world. The AMA has the dedicated mission of furthering, supporting, and advocating on behalf of model aviation and represents and supports a diverse community of aeromodeling enthusiasts. AMA’s nationwide community-based programming provides an established safety structure for all forms of model aviation including the recreational, educational and purposeful use of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS).

Joe Ruiz

Joe oversees the UPS Humanitarian Relief & Resilience Program, coordinating The UPS Foundation’s $15 million annual investment in program support, logistical expertise, skilled volunteers, and capacity building efforts to enhance community resilience and strengthen preparedness, response and recovery.

In this role, he oversees partner relationships, program development and operational execution to enhance the supply chain capabilities of UPS’s humanitarian relief partners. He manages The UPS Foundation’s groundbreaking partnership initiative with GAVI, the vaccine alliance, and Zipline, to launch the world’s first National Medical Drone Network in Rwanda. He also oversees the UPS Humanitarian Experts on Mission Program, to help strengthen humanitarian supply chains by embedding expert UPS supply chain volunteers with leading relief agencies for 6 months or longer. Over the past 10 years, Joe has coordinated UPS’s engagement in the Logistics Emergency Team (LET) program to help the U.N. World Food Programme and Global Logistics Cluster prepare for and respond to global crises. UPS has deployed more than 20 skilled volunteers and provided urgent logistics services across the globe including: Indonesia (2007), Myanmar (2008), Haiti (2008), Philippines (2009), Padang (2009), Haiti (2010), Pakistan (2010), Japan, Horn of Africa, Nigeria (2011), Sahel Region of Africa (2012), Philippines, West Africa (2013 and 2014), Nepal (2015), Japan, Ecuador (2016) and Peru (2017).

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efforts. The UPS Foundation also mobilized 468 in-kind shipments across 53 countries to support preparedness, response and recovery efforts in 2016. This humanitarian support includes UPS's ongoing commitment of over $5 million in support for the Global Refugee Crisis since 2012, including 6 charter flights and more than 40 ocean shipments to assist refugees last year.

Joe began his UPS career in 1988 and has served in various district, region and corporate assignments before joining The UPS Foundation in 2007. He currently serves on the board of the Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP), Operation Hope – Hope Coalition America Corporate Advisory Council, Good360 Disaster Recovery 360 Advisory Board and supports the Logistics Emergency Team Steering committee.

Victoria Wassmer

Victoria Wassmer is the FAA’s Assistant Administrator for Finance and Management, where she directs the agency’s $16.9 billion budget and a workforce of over 3,000 employees. In this role, she oversees the FAA’s financial management, the regional and Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center operations, and the information technology, contracting, and acquisition offices. Wassmer has more than 22 years of experience in establishing and leading high-profile organizations and programs in both public and private industry.

In late 2011, under her leadership, the agency consolidated its corporate support functions under a forward-thinking, shared services operating model. This shared services model reduced bureaucracy, cut the agency’s administrative overhead expenses, eliminated redundancies, and improved service to the flying public. Wassmer also instituted an agency-wide initiative to reduce and eliminate information technology costs, including the move to state-of-the-art cloud computing for the administrative systems used by 60,000 FAA employees and contractors.

In July 2016 she was selected to serve as the Acting Deputy Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. In that role, she was responsible for helping to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the largest aerospace system in the world, as well as regulating the safety of the U.S. aviation industry. Wassmer also served as the Chief NextGen Officer, where she was responsible for the development and implementation of the FAA’s air traffic control system modernization. Wassmer previously served as Vice President of Administration and Finance at the Millennium Challenge Corporation from 2010-2011, a federal agency that works with developing countries to reduce poverty through economic growth. She was responsible for overseeing the Corporation’s finance, human resources, information technology, logistics, acquisition, grant management, overseas administration, and security operations.

From 2004-2010, Wassmer held several senior positions within the FAA, including Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Chief Financial Officer; Deputy Director of the Office of Budget; and Manager of Performance and Cost Analysis. Prior to that, she was a Senior Associate with the Carmen Group and worked in the Office of Capital Programs & Oversight for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. From 1996-2002, Wassmer was a Policy Analyst at the Office of Management and Budget. At OMB, she also served as a Special Assistant in the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs and as a Program Examiner. In 1994, Wassmer worked in South Africa as a Research Assistant at the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

She holds a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard University and a Bachelors in Political Science from Bryn Mawr College.

Brian Wynne

Brian Wynne is president and CEO of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI), the world’s largest nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of unmanned systems and robotics. AUVSI represents more than 7,000 members from more than 60 countries involved in the fields of government, industry and academia. AUVSI members work in the defense, civil and commercial markets. Wynne brings in-depth experience in transportation and technology applications gained through leadership roles with industry associations and public-private partnerships. Prior to joining AUVSI in January 2015, he was president and CEO of the Electric Drive Transportation Association (EDTA), the trade association promoting battery, hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and fuel cell electric drive technologies and infrastructure.

Before joining EDTA in 2004, Wynne was senior vice president for business and trade at the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITSA). Previously, he led a global technology association as CEO of the Association for Automatic Identification and Mobility (AIM). He started his career as a legislative assistant to U.S. Sen. Charles Percy, and has served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations.

Wynne is a member of the Drone Advisory Committee (DAC), a group of key decision-makers formed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to support the safe introduction of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into the nation’s airspace. He is also a member of the FAA’s Unmanned Aircraft Safety Team (UAST), which is comprised of stakeholders from government and the aviation industry that gather and analyze data to enhance UAS safety and operations. He also served on the FAA’s UAS Registration and Micro UAS task forces.

Wynne earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Scranton, and a master’s degree from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He was also a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Cologne in Germany. For more than 20 years, Wynne has been an instrument-rated, general aviation pilot, and recently received a commercial pilot certificate. He flies a Socata Trinidad.
Acknowledgements

Over the course of the year we call upon numerous volunteers, sponsors, donors and other ancillary groups to support our effort to provide aerospace career enrichment programs to young people all over the country. This year, here are just a few of the many individuals we’d like to thank for helping to make it possible …

For the Convention

OBAP’s Aerospace Professional Development Team
Amy Kienast, Director of Career Services, MIAT College of Technology
Bill Pritchett, Director of Education, Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA)
United States Air Force
NASA Community Engagement Team
Tonika Johnson, FAA
Rob Strickland, United Airlines
Captain Stephanie Johnson, Delta Air Lines
Captain Albert Glenn, FedEx Express
Angelina Mack, FAA
Delicia Smalls, Ashford Advisors
Captain Houston Mills, UPS
Brian Wynne, president and CEO of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI)
Joe Ruiz, UPS
Martin Gomez, Director of Aeronautical Platforms, Facebook
Yoki Johnson, OBAP National Office Administrator
Shalishah “Petey” Franklin, OBAP Marketing & Communications
Claire, Gentry, IT Administrator
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Dannielle Boggs, OBAP Planner Assistant
Lynda Gray, OBAP Director, Meetings and Events

The 2017 Convention Planning Committee
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Special Acknowledgements
Captain Bart Roberts, JetBlue
Captain Karl Minter
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Mrs. Randall Rochon
Mrs. Xavier Samuels
Rhonda Marshall, UPS
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For the Academy

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Houston Airport System – Rhonda Arnold
National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBFAE)
World Youth Foundation – Karen Franklin
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Success isn’t rooted in sameness. Approaching things from different perspectives and working together for positive change is how progress is made. That’s true in business and in life. We salute all those who are striving to make the world a better, more inclusive place.

Here’s to the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) and to all those whose outstanding achievements serve to inspire the best in all of us.
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