



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FRONTIERS OF FLIGHT MUSEUM, TEXAS EAGLES FOR AVIATION
AND NORTH TEXAS TUSKEGEE AIRMEN CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY
MONTH WITH COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES**
Museum Hosts Special Presentations
Featuring African American Aviation Pioneers Past & Present

DALLAS (February 10, 2013) – Every February, Black History Month evokes a few iconic names in aviation, most notably the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II fame and Bessie Coleman, the first black woman pilot. This year, the **Frontiers of Flight Museum, the Texas Eagles for Aviation and Claude R. Platte DFW Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen** have partnered to bring a special Black History celebration to the North Texas community that highlights the achievements of these and other extraordinary African Americans aviation heroes past and present.

This two-day event will be held at the **Frontiers of Flight Museum, 6911 Lemmon Ave.**, and begin with engaging educational activities for more than 300 area middle school students on **Friday, Feb. 22**. Following on **Saturday, Feb. 23 from 2:00-3:30 p.m.** museum guests will enjoy a riveting presentation on the “State of Aviation” featuring a panel of distinguished African American aviators, historians and aviation administrators. This event is open to the general public with paid admission to the museum. Visit: www.flightmuseum.com.

The Black History Month Celebration at the Frontiers of Flight Museum will feature pioneers, modern aviators and space age pilots. Special guests and presenters include documented Tuskegee Airmen, an artist who paints African American aviators, and a pilot trained by **Chief Alfred Anderson**, widely considered to be the Father of Black Aviation. The event will also include an array of military and corporate, aviation pilots, as well as representatives from the Aerospace industry.

Following Saturday’s panel discussion on Feb. 23, attendees may also participate in a special drawing for a \$250 certificate for a Discovery Flight and Discovery Briefing. The raffle prize will be presented by **Major Alejandro House**, a distinguished Marine pilot who now serves as a corporate pilot for Bell Helicopter and flies the world’s fastest corporate jet – the Cessna Citation.

For more information, visit: www.flightmuseum.com; or call Inez Clark at (214) 364-1103.

MORE ON THE FRONTIERS OF FLIGHT MUSEUM:

The Frontiers of Flight Museum, a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate, is a gem in our North Texas community that attracts over 100,000 visitors annually including 30,000 students. The Museum is a learning laboratory using aviation and space flight to encourage and promote student excellence in science, technology, engineering and math (**STEM**). **Educational classes for all ages are offered throughout the year, designed to excite the imagination in STEM through spacecraft design, aerodynamics, model-building, space science, and other disciplines.**

Hours of operation: Monday – Saturday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Admission: Adults \$8; Seniors (65+) \$6; Youths/Students (3-17) \$5 and children under 3 are free. For more information, visit www.flightmuseum.com.

MORE ON THE MUSEUM PRESENTERS FOR FEB. 22 & FEB. 23:

1. **Captain Claude R. Platte** – Documented Tuskegee Airman, served as the primary flight instructor training over 400 blacks to solo and fly the PT13, PT17 and PT 19. Privileged to train cadets and dignitaries around the country, under his tutelage were famous fighter pilots such as William Broadwater, Col. George Boys and Norman Scales.

A young and energetic 91 year old, he is now retired from Bell Helicopter. Capt. Platte and others of the famed Tuskegee group now travel and fly about the country telling their stories to children of all ages so they can be inspired to reach their goals. (**Pioneer**)

2. **Lt. Calvin J. Spann** – Documented Tuskegee Airman. Upon his arrival to begin his aviation training at the Army Air Corps in Kessler Field, MS, he was informed that they did not train Black cadets. A week later he was sent to Tuskegee AI and here he received his wings graduating in the Class 44G. Lt. Spann became a member of the 100th Fighter Squadron, a part of the 332nd Fighter Group under the command of Co. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. He completed 26 combat missions before the end of WWII. After service, Lt. Spann sought employment with commercial airlines only to be denied due to racial discrimination.

Today he speaks to churches, schools and organizations about the Tuskegee Airmen Experience and how they succeeded with excellence. He encourages students to excel in math and science and stresses preparation as the key to achieving goals. (**Pioneer**)

3. **Staff Sergeant Homer Hogues** – Documented Tuskegee Airman. Assigned to the Famous 99th Fighter Squadron 332nd Fighter Group, Airman Hogues was proud to be a mechanic on airplanes. At Chanute Field in Illinois, Hogues gained specialized training on the P-47 Thunderbolt Aircraft. He recalls preparing airplanes for the Air Force gunnery competition in Las Vegas in 1949. Although the Tuskegee Airmen won the competition, due to racism the trophy was etched “Winner Unknown” and was lost for years.

Staff Sergeant Hogues continues to participate as a spokesperson of the Air Force and the Tuskegee Airmen. He shows love as he speaks to school children, church groups and private businesses about his “Tuskegee Airmen Experience.” **(Pioneer)**

4. **Captain Jeffie McNeal** – Is a Mississippi native and a graduate of Tuskegee Institute. Capt. McNeal was one of a handful of Tuskegee Army and Air Force ROTC students chosen during the mid-sixties for flight lessons given by Chief Alfred Anderson, considered to be the “Father of Black Aviation.” On his 1st solo, training in a Cessna 172, Capt. McNeal remembers being “too high and hot” to land and opted to go around, thus impressing and receiving praise from his instructor.

Capt. McNeal was commissioned in the Army as a 2nd Lt. and rose to the rank of Captain. He served a tour in Vietnam as a Port Officer and a Highway Transport Officer in the Transportation Department. **(Pioneer)**

5. **Major Alejandro House, USMC RET.** – Major “Brick” House, served with distinction in the US Marines as a Naval Aviator, flying the F/A 18 Aircraft. Capt. House flew more than 70 missions in Afghanistan and Iraq in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

Now the CEO of House Group, Inc, he continues to promote and foster aviation science in the secondary school systems. Major House has worked tirelessly with several school districts around the nation in building a strong foundation for their students.

He continues his flying career as the Asst. Chief Pilot for Bell Helicopter corporate fixed wing flight department and Captains the world’s fastest corporate aircraft – the Cessna Citation! **(Modern – Corporate & Military)**

6. **Larry Johnson** – Pilot Extraordinaire! A native Texan, he was inspired by Astronaut John Glenn and at an early age set in motion the steps required to fly and reach his goal of flight. Joining the Civil Air Patrol, two years later at age 16, Larry was selected for a flight training program offered by CAP and subsequently won an appointment to Private Pilot training, actually receiving this certificate before graduating from high school!

Later serving in the US Navy, he received extensive training as an electronics technician. Larry gained even more experience in this field in the private sector as a salesman in the home security industry. Ultimately, he decided to combine his passions, selling and flying, as part of a new direction in his career.

In 1977, Larry found solid success selling new Piper Aircraft. In 1996, Larry was recruited by Cutter Aviation to join the aircraft sales team. He continues as the Piper Aircraft Regional Sales Manager for Texas Piper . In addition, Larry has become responsible for Regional Sales of the new Hondajet.

With nearly 9,000 hours of total flight time, Larry is the father of four and grandfather of five. He gives back by his enthusiasm to share his talents and resources with youth and youth organizations at every possible opportunity! **(Modern – Corporate)**

7. **ElaRue** – (Erma Bonner Platte), wife of Capt. Claude R. Platte is a dynamic and delightful dame! A “renaissance” woman and artist extraordinaire, this energetic and exciting lady is a multifaceted jewel. A real estate broker, botanist, community activist, educator, humanitarian and did we mention “a polished artist”? has risen to the top. A member of the Fort Worth Society of Watercolor Artists, **ElaRue** has created many “masterpieces” rendering intriguing images of her family and other interesting individuals.

Come join her as she paints Col. Benjamin O. Davis, the West Point Graduate who shaped, trained and motivated the famed WWII Pilots, the Tuskegee Airmen to fight “fascism abroad” and conquer racism at home! **(Historian)**

8. **Dr. Marvin Cowens** – Texas Instrument Scientist and General Aviation Pilot. Several years ago, Dr. Cowens was traveling on an airplane during one of many business trips that he has taken on behalf of his job as a trouble shooter and problem solver for Texas Instruments. He was allowed to put on head phones and was able to hear the conversation between the pilots and the tower. Fascinated, Dr. Cowens decided that he wanted to learn more about aviation. Soon after that, he went on a “discovery flight” and was so enraptured with the experience that he bought an airplane before he even learned to fly!

Amassing more than 100,000 miles on an annual basis, through his work with Texas Instruments, Dr. Cowens is always excited to share his love for aviation with students and others. Emphasizing the importance of science, technology, engineering and math, Dr. Cowens is the perfect example of how mastering these skills have led him to a lifestyle filled with adventure and accomplishments!