



Captain Theresa Claiborne to Speak at Delaware State University *Inspirational Life Story of Breaking Barriers and Redefining What's Possible*

February 27, 2025

DOVER, Del. -- In honor of and celebration of Women's History Month, the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) has joined with Delaware State University, Delaware Department of Human Resources, and the Delaware Historical Society to proudly present "Beyond Boundaries: Where Imagination Takes Flight." The speaking engagement features the groundbreaking journey of the first black woman to fly in the United States Air Force, Captain Theresa Claiborne.

The presentation will take place inside Delaware State University's Education and Humanities Theatre on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 from 1:00P – 4:00P. Admission is FREE, but registration is encouraged at <https://www.drba.net/drba-presents-capt-claiborne-march-11-2025>. Following Capt. Claiborne's remarks, she'll be available to meet attendees and pose for pictures!

"The Delaware River and Bay Authority is proud to join with our three partners to sponsor this tremendous event with Captain Claiborne," said Thomas J. Cook, Executive Director of the DRBA. "Her story is one of courage, perseverance, and leadership-proving that boundaries exist only to be challenged. We hope that the community will join with us as we celebrate a true trailblazer and challenge ourselves to think beyond boundaries in all that we do."

"We are excited to partner with the Delaware River and Bay Authority to welcome Captain Theresa Claiborne to Delaware State University for Women's History Month," said Pamela Mosley Gresham, J.D., Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Chair of DE&I Council and Dr. Francine Edwards, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Co-Chair of DE&I Council for Delaware State University. "Captain Claiborne's career is a testament to her resilience, determination, and excellence. Celebrating her achievements not only honors her legacy but also inspires our next generation of female leaders to break barriers and pursue their dreams with unwavering confidence. Her story is a powerful reminder of the impact that diversity, equity, and inclusion have in shaping a brighter future for all."

"Through the Jane & Littleton Mitchell Center for African American Heritage, the Delaware Historical Society joins learning communities in exploring and amplifying the histories and narratives of individuals who push boundaries in positive directions," said Ivan Henderson, Executive Director of Delaware Historical Society. "These leaders provide inspiration for people of all backgrounds to hone remarkable skills in the pursuit of seemingly impossible dreams. We salute Captain Claiborne for blazing trails in service of our country and thank her for sharing her ongoing journey with our broader community."

"As a collaborative partner in hosting Captain Theresa Claiborne, the first Black female pilot in the history of the United States Air Force, is not just an honor, but a powerful reminder of the courage it takes to break barriers,"

said Richard Potter, Chief Diversity Officer for the State of Delaware. “Captain Claiborne’s journey inspires us to challenge the status quo and empowers the next generation to chart their own course with determination and resilience. Her story is a testament to the strength found in diversity and the limitless possibilities that arise when we dare to soar beyond the confines of convention.”

Theresa M. Claiborne retired as a Captain on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner at United Airlines in May 2024, one of only 24 Black women pilots among 17,000+ at the airline. She began her aviation journey in 1981 as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, making history in 1982 as the first black woman pilot in the Air Force. Over her 20-year military career, she served as an aircraft commander and instructor on the KC-135.

Joining United Airlines in 1990, Theresa flew several aircraft models and achieved Captain rank on the Boeing 757/767 in 2018, amassing over 22,000 flight hours during her career. Currently, she serves as President of Sisters of the Skies, a nonprofit dedicated to increasing black women in professional pilot careers and holds board positions with the WASP Museum and the Grand Dames of Aviation.

Captain Claiborne has received numerous awards, including the 2024 Katherine Wright Trophy and AOPA’s Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Aviation Inspiration Award. A graduate of California State University, Sacramento, she holds a degree in Communications with a Journalism minor.

About the Delaware River and Bay Authority

The DRBA, a bi-state governmental agency created by Compact in 1962, owns and operates the Delaware Memorial Bridge, the Cape May- Lewes Ferry, and the Forts Ferry Crossing. The DRBA also manages two airports in New Jersey (Millville Executive Airport and Cape May Airport) and three in Delaware (Wilmington Airport, Civil Air Terminal and Delaware Airpark). All DRBA operating revenues are generated through bridge, ferry and airport facilities. For more information, visit www.drba.net.

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