

## Flyers in Search of a Dream Unveils History of Pioneering Black Aviators

Flyers in Search of a Dream is an hour-long television special that tells the relatively unknown yet intriguing story of America's pioneering black aviators from the Golden Age of Aviation in the 1920s and 1930s. Rare and archival footage, photographs and dramatic vignettes highlight the program, which will be broadcast nationally on PBS Wednesday, February 25 at 10pm (check local listings).

pilot to successfully complete a transcontinental flight (1932). "This film is the culmination of my dream," says Hart. "Ever since I was a teenager, I dreamed of having these black aviation pioneers recognized as the heroes they truly were." The television special celebrates the efforts of Banning; Bessie Coleman, the first black pilot to receive a license, which she was

"The historic flight of the Wright brothers in 1903 sparked a popular enthusiasm for aviation. Participation by black Americans in the new age of flight, however, did not come easily. Racial discrimination, at the time still deeply embedded in American life, stood as powerful barrier to any vision of 'black wings.'" (Von Hardesty and Dominick Pisano wrote in their book, Black Wings).

## B.B. King: "A Listeners Guide to the Blues" on KNPR Radio, 89.5

Blues great B.B. King, a resident of Las Vegas, hosts "A Listeners Guide to the Blues" Saturday nights from 9:30 - 10 P.M. ON KNPR, 89.5 FM. Each program features a prominent blues artist with examples of his or her own regional style of blues.

The series opened Saturday February 14 with Son Seals, Chicago blues singer, songwriter and guitarist. In following weeks, blues artists Koko Taylor, Johnny Copeland and Lowell Fulson will be featured.

"A Listeners Guide to the Blues" is a special feature of KNPR's regular Saturday night blues program, hosted by Ray Curtis, which runs from 9:00 pm until 1:00 am every Saturday night. The program presents a wide variety of blues, ranging from folk blues to blues influenced jazz.



B.B. King



Walter J. Boyne, former director of the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, said, "The story of black participation in aviation is filled with the names of courageous men and women who had to overcome enormous social pressures in order to gain the right to pursue the dream of flight with all its risks and rewards. Their stories are largely forgotten, and with them, a rich portion of cultural heritage."

Shot on location in Los Angeles, Chicago and in Washington, DC at the Air and Space Museum, Flyers in Search of a Dream shows the familiar frustrations and struggles created by racial prejudice.

Flyers in search of a Dream -- based on a concept by Philip S. Hart, a University of Massachusetts professor, filmmaker and author -- documents this neglected and important phase of history through the lives and adventures of early black aviators, including Hart's great uncle James Herman Banning. Accompanied by mechanic Thomas C. Allen, Banning was the first black

forced to earn abroad (1922); William J. Powell, Sr., who organized the Bessie Coleman Aero clubs "to promote airmindedness" in the black community (1929), and Hubert Julian, one of the first licensed black pilots, who went on to pursue a controversial career as a showman and promoter of black aviation.

Flyers is one-of-a-kind," Philip Hart states. "There is no coherent visual document in existence which tells the story of America's early black aviators. The special has the potential to be a classic documentary with long term educational uses and distribution possibilities," Hart adds.

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