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August 12, 2009

Another Successful Black Pilots Association Summer Flight Academy

Flight instructors and students - standing from left to right: Fred Lewis, assistant director for BPA Summer Flight Academy, instructors Bob and Joyce Griffin and Anthony Hall, President of Black Pilots Association and academy organizer. Seated from left to right: Alex VanWright, Miles Victor, Danielle Morrison, Les Morris, first black commercial airline pilot; Jaylin Lewis, and Shahid Jordan.

Texas Southern University hosted the Black Pilots of America (BPA) Summer Flight Academy for the sixth year. Sixteen students ages 15-19 from all over the United States participated in this year's flight academy.

The flight academy cadets lived on the TSU campus for two weeks while adhering to a strict routine of college classroom studies, aviation based field trips and flight training. According to BPA Summer Flight Academy founder, Les Morris, "We run a tight ship; you need timely and disciplined to fly an airplane." Timeliness is just one of the important aspects stressed to the academy cadets. Each cadet must maintain strict discipline and respect in the classroom and be willing to work with other cadets and their instructors.

For thirty-seven (37) years the BPA, has been able to educate many students in the field of aviation some going on to lucrative careers in this field.

From this year's academy two cadets -Ernisha Hammock, Cleveland, OH and Alexander VanWright, Pearland, TX both graduating seniors have been accepted to the U.S. Naval Academy for the fall 2009 school year. Two students flew solo as a result of the academy.

According to operations officer, Fred Lewis, "We had a very strong group of students this summer. They were eager to learn and very attentive. "When asked about the next group of cadets he replied, "I can't wait until next year. Each group surpasses the last. We are looking forward to seeing what the future holds."