



## A Conversation With . . . .

### **CHARLOTTE JONES**

Lead Airport Certification Safety Inspector

Federal Aviation Administration, Western Pacific Region

A trailblazer in the industry, Charlotte Jones carries over 35 years of diverse aviation experience, from honorable service in the United States Armed Forces to partnering on the front lines with airport and industry stakeholders, ensuring our airports are running at their safest and most efficient for the traveling public.

Her career started in the U.S. Air Force where she quickly rose through the ranks in Airport Management, working various positions in operations, training, safety coordination, and as an Airport Manager. It was through her tenacious work as Program Manager, Pacific Forces Airport Management Training, where she was able to develop a full evaluation and understanding of the entire aviation system for safety, compatibility, and certification. She retired in 2007 but not after having developed and managed the Pacific Air Forces Airport Management Training Program for their entire staff. Following a brief stint managing the Curacao Airport, she joined the FAA in 2010, bringing her diverse and valuable experience to the office of Airport Certification.

When I spoke with Ms. Jones, I asked her what it means to represent the African American community in both the overall aviation industry and within the FAA. Not many people would know that Charlotte is the only African American female airport certification inspector within the agency. She commented that while it is a unique distinction to have, she also noted that *“more work needs to be done to engage a more diverse background of talent into our industry”*. She takes to heart and “walks the walk” with every opportunity offered of her to mentor the next generation of leaders and share opportunities given to her but past industry leaders. She is quick to acknowledge those who helped walk along her path in support, particularly her mentor in the military, Ms. Pamela Burgess who gave Charlotte her first

opportunity in a management role. She is also quick to recognize current industry colleagues, whom she draws inspiration from daily. *"I am always inspired and encouraged by the good work that I see from others every day. I particularly want to acknowledge Gladys Brown at Yuma, who constantly promotes professionalism in her industry through her daily work"*

As our interview drew to a close, I asked her how our industry can continue to celebrate and support individuals of all diverse backgrounds, and she provided this final piece of advice.

*First of all, we need to continue to have the honest and open conversations of where we have made progress and the work that needs to continue. Think about your legacy, and how you want to leave your role in a better position than when you received it. Be open to change and invite others to share in your professional journey. Be a mentor, plant that seed in someone and encourage them to aspire to be their best self.*

As we celebrate Black History Month, we honor and thank Ms. Charlotte Jones for her continued tenacity, collaborative spirit through teamwork, and dedication to improving our airports through her technical knowledge and passion to include everyone at the table.