American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Embracing diversity

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Throughout February, American Airlines is celebrating Black History Month with numerous events and initiatives. We're also taking this opportunity to highlight the stories of our African-American team members and the important work they do to make us the world's greatest airline. This week, People Talent Acquisition Managing Director Marissa Horne shares her story … and her grandfather's.

In 1946, a young man returned home from World War II, unsure of what he would do next. He wanted to be a pilot, but that opportunity wasn't available to him. His dream was deferred because he was black, and in those times, very few opportunities were presented to people of color. But after going to college, he fulfilled his wish to work in aviation — as a skycap for American Airlines.

That man was my grandfather. As a child, I grew up hearing stories about how special this company was because it provided opportunities for people when it may not have been popular. But it was the right thing to do. American has always believed in the business case for diversity – that when we intentionally bring together individuals from different backgrounds, with different experiences and perspectives, we all succeed in achieving our shared goals.

I've seen that firsthand as a senior leader here. My team works to ensure our colleagues have the tools they need to do their jobs effectively. Our aim is to validate their trust in us as a company while empowering them to provide you with great customer service.

But earning trust isn't easy. That's part of why it's been difficult to hear from some customers that we haven't always lived up to our ideals. This company is proud of its longstanding commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality. It is also a company freshly reminded that there is always more work to do.

Through the years, I've had the privilege of working at organizations that are leaders in their industry, and I'm

confident American will be a global leader in these areas going forward, including tackling the difficult problems of implicit bias and discrimination. For my part, I will continue to promote and develop a pipeline of diverse talent that will help us set and reset the bar for years to come.

We're fond of saying that we fly over borders and walls and divisiveness to connect people with each other. As we recognize Black History Month, I hope you'll be heartened — as I am — that at a time when attacks on diversity are evoking images from a bleak time in our country's past, American is focused on creating a culture that will help drive our country into a brighter future. On behalf of American and my more than 120,000 colleagues, thank you for flying with us today.

Marissa Horne
Managing Director, People Talent Acquisition
Fort Worth, Texas

Marissa is a 2017 recipient of the Earl G. Graves Award for Leadership in Inclusion and Diversity. You can learn more about the award and American's commitment to inclusion and diversity at **aa.com/diversity**.

Marissa Horne