



## AIR TRANSPORT DISTRICT LODGE 142



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# Black History Month Reflection at ExpressJet

Brothers and Sisters,

As we reflect on Black History Month, and celebrate those who have fought not only for human rights but also equal rights, we sat down with one of our own IAM Flight Attendants in Cleveland to find out just what Black History Month means to her and her family.

Terri Leblanc has been a Flight Attendant with ExpressJet since March of 1992. She was originally based in Bangor, Maine, then Newark, and currently in Cleveland for several years. As we sat down to discuss her life experiences, here is what Terri had to say:



**IAM:** What is one of the main challenges you have faced throughout your life as a black woman?

**TL:** I have faced some prejudices in my life, not being taken seriously or people not thinking I am smart enough based on my skin color.

**IAM:** Did you face any challenges becoming a Flight Attendant, specifically surrounding your race or gender?

**TL:** Becoming a Flight Attendant was one of the easiest things I have done. I called and asked if they were hiring. The next day they brought me in for an interview, and by 6PM I had the job!

**IAM:** That is incredible! Now you started with ExpressJet at a time when there was no union on the property. Over the years and through your experience, have you noticed any impact on minorities due to having a union?

**TL:** I was hired two years prior to having a union on the property, and fought hard in order to protect all members, equally. I really believe that the IAM empowers minorities. I don't believe they see color, but the opportunities in the organization really do change peoples' lives for the better. I have found many opportunities in the IAM to better my life and the life of my coworkers.

**IAM:** Looking at the country today, what surprises you most about civilization and discrimination?

**TL:** In 2017, I'm surprised that in America, we still cannot live in peace and harmony in our great country, but I do believe that the IAM fights for people who cannot fight for themselves. This gives me hope that together we can make a positive change.

**IAM:** Tell us a little bit about who you are today, Terri...

**TL:** Well, I'm a proud mother of a beautiful daughter Kyndyll who is 9. Every day I wake up and teach her to be strong and to stand up for herself. I love my job, and between Kyndyll and ExpressJet, my days are full!

Terri, thank you for this insight on your perspective of Black History Month, what your life has been like as a strong black mother, and someone who has truly helped all Flight Attendants at ExpressJet by fighting for workers' rights for over 25 years! The IAM is committed to standing with you to fight for equality for every worker in America.

In Solidarity,

Melissa Brennan  
**SPECIAL REP.**

MB/slb

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opeiu #277

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