

Miami International Airport
Division of Fine Arts & Cultural Affairs

Women of a New Tribe

A PHOTOGRAPHIC CELEBRATION OF THE BLACK AMERICAN WOMAN



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Women of a New Tribe is an exhibition created by North Carolina photographer Jerry Taliaferro, designed to honor the physical and spiritual beauty of the Black American woman, emphasizing her soulfulness – her spirit of hope, compassion, love and nobility. Taliaferro presents his subjects in the dramatic, high-glamour style reminiscent of Hollywood photography from the 1930s and 1940s. The photographs, which now consist of more than 200 images, explore different themes such as tribal beauty, portraiture and family relationships. Taliaferro explains that the exhibition title was inspired by hearing author Toni Morrison refer to African Americans as “new world Africans” in an interview on National Public Radio. This resonated with him as he believes that “African Americans are a new people born of the American experience.”

As **Women of a New Tribe** travels throughout the United States, each community hosting the exhibition is offered the option to have local women photographed and to have their portraits included in the core exhibition. As such, we invited our Miami-Dade County Aviation Department community to nominate women from our Department to participate in the project, and as a result, contribute to the growth and diversity of the exhibition.

Seventeen women were nominated by their peers, colleagues and/or supervisors and selected for inclusion based on a strong record of service to the Aviation Department, as well as community service and volunteerism. Every one of these women fulfills a unique and vital role in the Department and within her community. Through this exhibition, we hope to honor and recognize their contributions to

the workplace and their charitable service to the South Florida community.

We are grateful to Jerry Taliaferro and his wife, Debra, for their dedication to this project and for their generosity in helping make this exhibition possible at Miami International Airport. I would also like to personally acknowledge their openness and generosity of spirit as I know, all of us involved with the project were touched by their presence. Jerry and Debra gave of themselves in ways that cannot be quantified here.

Yolanda Sánchez, Ph.D.
Director
Airport Fine Arts & Cultural Affairs

The Women Nominated and Selected from Miami-Dade Aviation Department



Miriam Adderley
Cash Management



Michelle Charles
Fine Arts & Cultural Affairs



Althea Coleman
Human Resources



Cynthia Collins
Human Resources



Tametria Harris
Concession Business Development



Sonia Bridges
Human Resources/Risk Management



Katherine James
Cash Management



Lauraine Murray
Marketing



Cynthia Manuel
Human Resources/Risk Management



Michele Raymond
Properties Management



Margaret H. Moss
Real Estate Management



Stephanie Momplaisir
Human Resources/Risk Management



Gail Seay
Human Resources



Lorraine Washington
Information Systems



Sharon Weekes
Human Resources



Bobbie Jones-Wilfork
Human Resources



Gina Thomas
Facilities Management

Women of a New Tribe

The Soul of a People

If you seek the soul
of a people, look to
its women.

For it is at their bosoms
that the seeds of love,
compassion and courage
are first planted
and nurtured.

Look into their faces
and see what was
and what will be.

Jerry Taliaferro, Photographer
Women of a New Tribe Project

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Jerry Taliaferro was born in the small southern town of Brownsville, Tennessee. After graduating high school in May 1972, he joined the Army. Almost a year later, he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point and graduated four years later as a member of the Class of 1977. His real interest in photography began when he was posted to Fort Bragg, North Carolina for the Special Forces Officers Course in 1981. While serving in Germany, his interest in photography continued to grow and in 1985, he was published for the first time when a Munich magazine purchased the rights to one of his images.

After returning to the United States in the summer of 1985, Jerry began doing assignments for advertising and design firms. In July 1988, he left the military and began his pursuit of a career in commercial photography. Over the ensuing years, his interest turned more to fine art photography. This change in direction has resulted in several projects and published pieces including the book, **Women of a New Tribe**, which is based on this exhibition.

Jerry Taliaferro currently resides with his wife, Debra, in Charlotte, NC.

Artist's Statement

In June 2002, The **Women of a New Tribe** project premiered at the Afro-American Cultural Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. Since that time, the exhibit has traveled to several cities where we have also frequently photographed local women to be included in the exhibition. Most of the women chosen to take part in this project were selected for contributions they had made to their respective communities. They were teachers, businesswomen, volunteers, activists, homemakers, wives, mothers and grandmothers. While their fields of endeavor may have varied widely, most of the women I have encountered have demonstrated a common trait: They were great human beings.

The Women of a New Tribe exhibit has been billed as a celebration of the physical and spiritual beauty of the Black American woman. Indeed, many of the subjects featured possess incredible physical beauty. Yet many of them also possess the kind of beauty that does not result from "line and curve" or some other random confluence of physical traits. Many of the subjects are also beautiful because of their strength, their compassion, their courage and their love. I challenge viewers of this exhibit to perceive the beauty of our subjects with their hearts as well as their eyes.

I have been greatly impressed by the women selected from the Miami-Dade Aviation Department to participate in this exhibition. Every one of them was an absolute joy to be around. The Miami community is truly blessed by the presence of these women who continue to give of themselves and their many talents. How could anyone spend any time with these women and not be filled with hope about the future of humanity? Our task to photograph these incredible women was made easy by the light that poured from them. When they talked about their passions and projects, they literally glowed. Those who know these amazing women should thank God for having shared time and space with them. They have led, as we should lead. They have served, as we should serve. They have loved, as we should love. They are the best of us.

Jerry Taliaferro, Photographer

Front cover photographs: Jerry Taliaferro

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