



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

43 EXTRAORDINARY UNDERGRADUATES SELECTED FOR THE INAUGURAL CLASS OF PATTI GRACE SMITH FELLOWS

SELECTED FROM A NATIONWIDE POOL, THESE BLACK UNDERGRADS EARN CASH GRANTS, MENTORSHIP, AND PAYING INTERNSHIPS AT THE NATION'S LEADING SPACE COMPANIES.

WASHINGTON, DC - FEBRUARY 24, 2021 - The Patti Grace Smith Fellowship, a non-profit program helping bring long-overdue diversity to the US aerospace industry, has announced its inaugural class of Fellows. 43 Black undergraduate students – each currently enrolled in the first or second year of a bachelor's degree program or in associate's degree program – have earned their place in the Class of 2021 after a fair and rigorous three-round selection process in which each candidate was thoroughly vetted by a group of aerospace industry professionals, rising star early career employees, and corporate employers.

“The Patti Grace Smith Fellowship exists to serve extraordinarily talented students who possess everything that is needed to thrive in aerospace, but who come from a community where talent has long been overlooked by our industry,” said Col. B. Alvin Drew, Jr., (USAF, Ret.), a two-time Space Shuttle astronaut and a co-founder of the Fellowship. “These new Patti Grace Smith Fellows inspire us with their drive, their intellect, their work ethic, and their deep commitment to advancing the state of the aerospace industry – not only in terms of our science and engineering, but also in terms of how we cultivate and honor talent in our workforce. The level of interest we received from applicants, and the caliber of the students who've made it through three intense rounds of selection show beyond a shadow of a doubt the incredible impact that Black excellence can, has, and will make in aerospace.”

Patti Grace Smith Fellows each earn a challenging internship at one of the nation's leading aerospace firms, a living wage, two hand-picked personal mentors, and a cash grant of approximately \$2,000 to go towards professional or school expenses.

The Patti Grace Smith Fellowship was created in 2020 to combat the longstanding and well-quantified under-representation of Black and African-American employees in the US aerospace workforce. Though the aerospace industry has made important strides since the days when African-Americans were legally barred from studying in many universities and holding many positions in the aerospace workforce, there is still a great deal of progress to be made. While African-Americans make up 13.4% of the US population and 15.3% of American undergraduate and graduate students, a recent study conducted by Aviation Week Network found that only 6% of US Aerospace and Defense workers and only 3% of aerospace executives are Black.

The program, which is based closely on the award-winning Brooke Owens Fellowship, was founded by Drew, undergraduate student and Brooke Owens Fellowship alumna Khristian Jones, aerospace engineer Tiffany Russell Lockett, and aerospace executive Will Pomerantz. The program's name was chosen to honor a beloved aerospace industry leader who overcame a system of legalized racial segregation: as a young girl, Patti Grace Smith (then Patricia Jones) was one of a dozen Black students to integrate Tuskegee High School, and was a plaintiff in a landmark case that integrated the public schools in Alabama, as upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States. Her illustrious career was highlighted by her role leading the Federal Aviation Administration's Office of Commercial Space Transportation in the early days of the nation's space renaissance.

The Patti Grace Smith Fellowship Class of 2021 is composed of:

- **Amanial Abraham.** Originally from Phoenix, AZ, Mr. Abraham is now a first-year student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology studying Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Mr. Abraham will intern as an Engineer at Venturi Astrolab.
- **Alina Ampeh.** Originally from Fairfax, VA, Ms. Ampeh is now a first-year student at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign studying Electrical Engineering. Ms. Ampeh will intern as an Engineer at Sierra Nevada Corporation.
- **Jesudunsin Awodele.** Originally from Dacula, GA, Mr. Awodele is now a second-year student at the Georgia Institute of Technology studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Awodele will intern as a Systems Engineer at Boeing.
- **Alexandria Baca.** Originally from Las Vegas, NV, Ms. Baca is now a first-year student at the University of Central Florida studying Aerospace Engineering. Ms. Baca will intern as an Engineer at Virgin Galactic.
- **Loubensky Baine.** Originally from Miami, FL, Mr. Baine is now a second-year student at the University of Central Florida studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Baine will intern as an Aerospace & Systems Engineer at BlackSky.
- **Kojo Bekoe-Sakyi.** Originally from Turlock, CA, Mr. Bekoe-Sakyi is now a second-year student at the Georgia Institute of Technology studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Bekoe-Sakyi will intern as an Engineer at Airbus U.S. Space & Defense.
- **Quintarius Bell.** Originally from Atlanta, GA, Mr. Bell is now a second-year student at the University of Miami studying Mechanical Engineering. Mr. Bell will intern as an Engineer at Relativity Space.
- **Isaac Broussard.** Originally from Lake Charles, LA, Mr. Broussard is now a first-year student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology interested in studying Aerospace Engineering and Applied Mathematics. Mr. Broussard will intern as an Engineer at Axiom Space.
- **Alexis Burris.** Originally from Felton, DE, Ms. Burris is now a second-year student at The University of Maryland-College Park studying Aerospace Engineering. Ms. Burris will intern as a Systems Engineer at Northrop Grumman
- **Megan Bynoe.** Originally from Point Pleasant, NJ, Ms. Bynoe is a first-year student at Rutgers University - New Brunswick studying Materials Science and Engineering. Ms. Bynoe will intern as a Materials Engineer at Relativity Space.

- **Lauren Carethers.** Originally from Ann Arbor, MI, Ms. Carethers is now a second-year student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology studying Aerospace Engineering with a focus in energy. Ms. Carethers will intern as an investment team member at Space Capital.
- **Elias Hailu Daniel.** Originally from Silver Spring, MD, Mr. Daniel is now a second-year student at the University of Maryland - College Park studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Daniel will intern as a Hardware Development Engineer at ABL Space Systems.
- **Jeremiah Davis.** Originally from Birmingham, AL. Mr. Davis is currently a first-year student at Calhoun Community College studying Aerospace Welding and Technology. Mr. Davis will intern as an Engine Development Engineer at SpaceX.
- **Joshua Kennedy Davis.** Originally from Dallas, TX, Mr. Davis is now a first-year student at the University of Texas at Austin studying Aerospace Engineering and Government. Mr. Davis will intern as an Engineer at Airbus U.S. Space & Defense.
- **Kailen De Saussure.** Originally from Columbus, GA, Mr. De Saussure is now a second-year student at the Georgia Institute of Technology studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. De Saussure will intern as a Systems Engineer at General Dynamics Mission Systems.
- **Taliyah Emory-Muhammad.** Originally from Silver Spring, MD, Ms. Emory-Muhammad is now a second-year student at the University of Southern California studying Astronautical Engineering. Ms. Emory-Muhammad will intern as an Engineer at Masten Space Systems.
- **Mya Guillaume.** Originally from East Stroudsburg, PA, Ms. Guillaume is now a second-year student at The Pennsylvania State University studying Aerospace Engineering. Ms. Guillaume will intern as an Engineer at Maxar Technologies.
- **Amanda Gutiérrez-Nieves.** Originally from San Germán, PR, Ms. Gutiérrez-Nieves is now a first-year student at the University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez studying Mechanical Engineering. Ms. Gutiérrez-Nieves will intern as a Hardware Engineer at ABL Space Systems.
- **Noah Herbert.** Originally from Sterling, VA, Mr. Herbert is now a second-year student at Purdue University studying Mechanical Engineering. Mr. Herbert will intern as an Engineer at Ball Aerospace.
- **Niya Hope-Glenn.** Originally from Schenectady, NY. Ms. Hope-Glenn is now a first-year student at Howard University studying Chemical Engineering. Ms. Hope-Glenn will intern as an Engineer at First Mode.
- **Junia Janvier.** Originally from Providence, RI, Ms. Janvier is now a second-year student at Boston University studying Computer Science. Ms. Janvier will intern as a Software Engineer at The Aerospace Corporation.
- **Megan Jordan.** Originally from Mobile, AL, Ms. Jordan is now a second-year student at The University of Alabama in Huntsville studying Aerospace Engineering. Ms. Jordan will intern as a Structures Engineer at Hermeus Corporation.
- **Hermon Kaysha.** Originally from Ethiopia by way of Peabody, MA, Mr. Kaysha is now a first-year student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology studying Computer Science. Mr. Kaysha will intern as an Engineer at First Mode.
- **Andre Ketter.** Originally from McKinney, TX, Mr. Ketter is now a first-year student at Southern Methodist University studying Biological Sciences. Mr. Ketter will intern as an Analyst at Bryce Space and Technology.

- **Nehemiah Key.** Originally from Flossmoor, IL, Mr. Key is now a second-year student at The Ohio State University studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Key will intern as a Systems Engineer at L3 Harris Technologies.
- **Kyle Kingsberry.** Originally from Kensington, MD, Mr. Kingsberry is now a first-year student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Kingsberry will intern as an Engineer at Blue Origin.
- **Kirk “KJ” McLean Jr.** Originally from Upper Marlboro, MD, Mr. McLean is now a second-year student at the University of Maryland - College Park studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. McLean will intern as an Engineer at L3Harris Technologies.
- **Zion Moss.** Originally from Miami, FL, Mr. Moss is currently a second-year student at Purdue University studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Moss will intern as an Engineer at SpaceX.
- **Donovan N’Gum.** Originally from Charlotte, NC, Mr. N’Gum is now a first-year student at North Carolina State University studying Aerospace Engineering. Mr. N’Gum will intern as an Engineer at Virgin Orbit.
- **Myles Noel.** Originally from Norfolk, VA, Mr. Noel is now a first-year student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology studying Chemistry. Mr. Noel will intern as a Materials Engineer at Relativity Space.
- **Ciarra Ortiz.** Originally from Wingdale, NY, Ms. Ortiz is now a second-year student at the Georgia Institute of Technology studying Biomedical Engineering with a minor in Aerospace Engineering. Ms. Ortiz will intern as an Engineer at the MIT Space Exploration Initiative Lab.
- **Isaac Owen.** Originally from Dublin, CA, Mr. Owen is now a first-year student at Princeton University studying Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Owen will intern as a Testing Engineer at Joby Aviation.
- **Jovanna Patterson.** Originally from Douglasville, GA, Ms. Patterson is now a first-year student at Georgia Institute of Technology studying Mechanical Engineering. Ms. Patterson will intern as an Engineer at Venturi Astrolab.
- **Anaelle Roc.** Originally from Kings Park, NY, Ms. Roc is now a first-year student at Pomona College studying Astrophysics and Politics. Ms. Roc will intern as an Engineer at Relativity Space.
- **Bria Romero.** Originally from Gurnee, IL, Ms. Romero is now a second-year student at Rice University studying Mechanical Engineering. Ms. Romero will intern as an Engineer at United Launch Alliance.
- **Nyima Sanneh.** Originally from Missouri City, TX, Ms. Sanneh is now a first-year student at Texas A&M University studying Aerospace Engineering. Ms. Sanneh will intern as an Engineer at Hawkeye 360.
- **Chelsea Slater.** Originally from Tampa, FL, Ms. Slater is now a first-year at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University studying Engineering as well as a 3L at the University of Florida Levin College of Law. Ms. Slater will intern as an Analyst at the Aerospace Industries Association.
- **Melford Spiff-Rufus.** Originally from Richmond, TX, Mr. Spiff-Rufus is now a first-year student at Princeton University studying Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. Mr. Spiff-Rufus will intern as an Avionics Engineer at SpaceX.

- **Jenesis Tucker.** Originally from San Antonio, TX, Ms. Tucker is now a second-year student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University studying Aeronautics. Ms. Tucker will intern as a Flight Test Engineer at Joby Aviation.
- **Shalayah-Naomi Webb.** Originally from San Diego, CA. Ms. Webb is a third-year student at San Diego City College with plans to transfer to a four-year university to study Aerospace Engineering. Ms. Webb will intern as an Engineer at Draper Laboratory.
- **Brandon Wells.** Originally from San Diego, CA. Mr. Wells is now a first-year student at San Diego State University studying Mechanical Engineering. Mr. Wells will intern as an Engineer at SpaceX.
- **Paden Wright.** Originally from Texarkana, TX, Mr. Wright is now a first-year student at Tuskegee University studying Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering. Mr. Wright will intern as an Engineer at Maxar Technologies.
- **Simone Williams.** Originally from Flossmoor, IL, Ms. Williams is currently a rising third-year student at Yale University studying Astrophysics. Ms. Williams will intern as a Systems Engineer at Ball Aerospace.

For more information about the Fellows, their host companies, or the program itself, please visit pgsfellowship.org.

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