

The Port Authority Remembers Fallen Colleagues

It was a rainy and somber morning on February 26 as family, friends, survivors, and Port Authority employees gathered to honor those we lost 27 years ago in the attacks on the World Trade Center.

Among the victims on February 26, 1993 were four Port Authority colleagues – Senior

Structural Maintenance Supervisor **Robert Kirkpatrick**, Chief Maintenance Supervisor **Stephen Knapp**, Assistant Chief Mechanical Supervisor **William Macko**, and secretary **Monica Rodriguez Smith**, who was carrying an unborn child. Also lost were Windows on the World employee Wilfredo Mercado and WTC visitor John DiGiovanni.



PAPD Honor Guard opening the ceremony

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Making History, One Generation to the Next

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The Port Authority's history is rich with the accomplishments of African American leaders and professionals, who've contributed greatly over the years to the agency's mission of keeping the region moving. Their names occupy a special place in the Port Authority archives. **Ernesto Butcher**, the universally admired Chief Operating Officer who calmly helped steer the Port Authority through the chaotic aftermath of 9/11. **Henry DeGeneste**, the first African American to serve as Port Authority Police Department Superintendent. Aviation Director **Huntley Lawrence** and PATH Director/General Manager **Clarelle DeGraffe** are among today's leaders making a difference at the agency.

In February, *Portfolio* asked representatives from various Port Authority facilities, and with differing levels of PA experience, to reflect on their own histories, their personal and professional influences, and on what Black History Month means to them. Here are some of their responses:

Audrey Dagnachew – Senior Engineer of Projects, Engineering

I am reminded, especially during Black History Month, that many pioneers forged the path so that I can be here today. I've had the privilege to serve the PA for almost 26 years, leading projects, and in my current role supporting TB&T's multi-billion-dollar capital plan with a diverse team of talented people. One challenge I face periodically and especially when meeting new people: some folks



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PA Airports Launch Program to Help the Visually Impaired

John F. Kennedy International, Newark Liberty International, and LaGuardia Airports will now offer free [Aira](#) services as part of a year-long pilot program that combines mobile technology, artificial intelligence, and real-time human interaction to help the visually impaired get around.

"This customer service initiative is designed to provide assistance to our special needs population," said PA Executive Director **Rick Cotton**. "We are always looking to find new ways to increase accessibility at the airports for all our customers."

"The Port Authority is strongly committed to a policy of inclusion across all our facilities," said Chairman **Kevin O'Toole**. "Our airports are access points to the world and this innovative use of

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STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

And the Techie Goes To...

The TEC Department recently wrapped up its latest quarterly meeting, which was highlighted by the addition of the Techies, the first-ever awards ceremony for its new rewards and recognition program. The award winners included: **Patti Chung**, for “Not My First Rodeo;” **MaryAnne Metzger**, for “Unsung Hero;” **Zia Islam** and **Vincent Cerracchio**, for “TEC Teamwork;” **Amit Parikh**, for “Grace Under Pressure;” **Brett Harrison**, for “Operational Excellence – Projects;” and **Evelyn Harris**, for “Operational Excellence – Support.” Presenting the awards for all six categories were members of the selection committee – **Bob Maggi**, **Tammy Gerardi**, **Niko Ciccolella**, **Abe Baaziz**, **Hudi Schnall**, **Erik Diaz**, **Craig Goldstein**, **David Fitterman**, and **Stephen Worsthorn** – who were randomly selected during the October TEC Departmental meeting. The committee deliberated for three months to pick the winners.



Front, left to right: MaryAnne Metzger, Patti Chung, Zia Islam. Back, left to right: Brett Harrison, Amit Parikh, Vincent Cerracchio

Evelyn Harris

PA Airports Launch Program to Help the Visually Impaired

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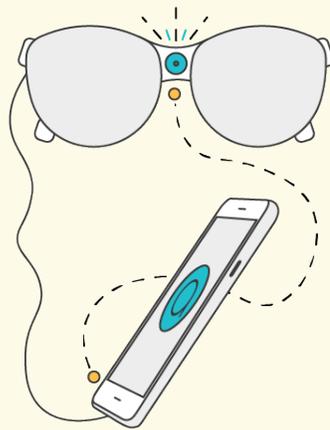
technology will help ensure they remain accessible to all of our customers.”

The free service will be available to travelers via a smartphone app paid for by the Port Authority and provided by Aira, a company that uses video-chatting technology with additional support from a customer representative to provide wayfinding assistance to visually impaired travelers.

“Navigating an airport with limited or no vision is an enormous challenge on the best of days,” said PA Director of Aviation **Huntley A. Lawrence**. “Now, with Aira, we can provide real-time help anywhere at our major airports for people with limited vision capabilities.”

Aira will be accessible from various public access locations around the airport, such as the frontage curbside, AirTrain, and within the terminals, excluding TSA and CBP checkpoint areas.

Using a smartphone, customers can download the application, sign up, and promptly connect to a remote professional agent who can see the user’s surroundings through their device’s camera. This enables agents to provide real-time audio descriptions as well as GPS location, maps, rideshare, and photo-sharing capabilities. The ability to connect with a highly trained person who can view surroundings through a phone’s camera provides easier mobility for those needing guidance around the airports.



PA Engineers Share Their Knowledge and Expertise

The Port Authority Engineering team of **Angel Martinez**, Deputy Chief of Operations/Engineering, and **Sadia Janjua**, Program Director of Project Controls and VDC, presented to over 200 owners, contractors, engineers, and other project controls professionals at the Advancing Project Controls 2020 Conference in Houston, Texas. The presentation, which was held on February 4, was titled “Securing a Seat at the Table for Project Controls: How to Gain the Respect & Buy-in of Corporate Leadership.” The discussion focused on several topics, including: defining the strategic goals of a project controls team and linking it to the top priorities of the firm; how to quantify the value of better schedules, forecasts and data: what are the numbers that will grab attention; identifying an objective: what do you want from management, how much will it cost, and how to prove the ROI; and influencing senior decision makers through data to ensure the right risk mitigation actions on a project.



Sadia Janjua and Angel Martinez present to conference attendees

TRADING POST

Items up for sale include two cars and a microwave. Visit the [Trading Post](#) for the full list.



CALENDAR

International Women's Day 2020

Tuesday, March 10, 8:30 – 11 a.m., 4 WTC, 23rd floor, Board Room. Join the Port Authority Women's Council at the fifth-annual International Women's Day program, where a panel of distinguished Port Authority women will share their insights and inspiring career journeys. The Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Claudia Natanson, Information and Cyber Security Specialist, Security Practitioners Ltd. The moderator will be **Andrea Cristina Ruiz**, Senior Economic Analyst, Planning; and the panelists will be **Jessica Smith**, Manager, Professional Services, Procurement; **Nina Grava**, Management Intern, Technology; **Christina Callahan**, Deputy General Manager, LaGuardia Airport; and **Annie Persaud**, Deputy Director, Management & Budget. Light Breakfast will be served from 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. To RSVP, [click here](#). Seating

is limited and will be provided on a first come, first served basis.

Purim at the Port Authority

Tuesday, March 10, at 3:30 p.m. at 4 WTC, 23rd Floor, Conference Room 1. Please join the Port Authority Shomrim Society for a Purim Gathering and Megillah Reading on Purim. The event will feature a Megillah Reading by Port Authority Chaplain Rabbi Mendy Carlebach and traditional Purim fare, like hamentashen. RSVP to **Benjamin Jervis** at bjervis@panynj.gov or Lieutenant **Scot Pomerantz** at spomerantz@panynj.gov.

FDU Open House at EWR

Wednesday, March 18, from 12 – 6 p.m. at EWR Building 1. Advance your career with a Masters in Public Administration (MPA), specialization in Global Transport Management. Attend an open house with Fairleigh Dickinson University. Enroll for evening classes during summer 2020 at Newark Airport. 50% off-campus tuition

rate. Ask HR about additional tuition benefits. Advanced standing possible for seasoned professionals. Classes start May 18. For more information: 201-692-2741 or mpa@fdu.edu.

Women in Law Enforcement Symposium

Monday, March 30, doors open at 7:45 a.m., event from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 4 WTC Board Room, 23rd Floor. In honor of Women's History Month, the Port Authority Police Department is hosting its first-annual Women in Law Enforcement Symposium. This occasion will provide an overview of the challenges women face in law enforcement and highlight the great work that they have accomplished throughout history. Join attendees from inside and outside the Port Authority in examining this important topic and celebrating women's successes. [View the flyer](#) for more information. Space is limited – rsvp to PAPDWILE@panynj.gov.

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Family and friends of the fallen convened for a family breakfast organized by the Port Authority, which was followed by a commemorative Catholic Mass held at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, where Executive Director **Rick Cotton** and Chairman **Kevin O'Toole** delivered gospel readings.

PAPD Pipes and Drums and Honor Guard later opened the annual memorial service on the grounds of the World Trade Center's National September 11 Memorial Plaza. At 12:18 p.m., the time of the attack, gatherers observed a moment of silence. Relatives read the names of the victims, and attendees placed roses upon the brass plaque on the memorial pool that bears the names of those lost.

In his remarks, Executive Director Cotton said, "I'm here to represent the thousands upon thousands of employees of the Port Authority – both present and past – who I can assure stand with you in remembering and in dedicating all that we do to rebuild and to bring an energy to the organization and to our facilities in honor of those

who perished on that day."

As with every anniversary, Port Authority leadership and staff came together for the commemoration. Attendees also included Chief Procurement Officer **Lillian Valenti**, Director of WTC Construction **Alan Reiss**, Chief Financial Officer **Libby McCarthy**, Board Secretary **James McCoy**, Special Counselor to the Executive Director **Robert Gibbon**, Chief of Staff to the Chairman **Peter Simon**, and Senior Advisor to the Chairman **Benjamin Feldman**. Flags at all Port Authority facilities were flown at half-staff in remembrance of our fallen colleagues.

Twenty-seven years have passed, but the Port Authority's promise to remember is strong, which was echoed in the Executive Director's words of support and condolences.

"The resilience of those who lived though the tragic events of that day in 1993, many of whom were also forced to experience the subsequent 9/11 attacks, is a testament to the strength of our humanity and our community," said Cotton.



Roses placed onto the memorial pool plaque



Executive Director Rick Cotton

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don't know how to look past my physical attributes and focus on the value that I bring to the table. On the flip side, almost everyone I've had a connection with has inspired me in some way. So in essence I've had hundreds of mentors inside and outside the PA and I have mentored many others.

Anthony Miller – Senior Compliance Analyst, Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Black History is the backbone of American history, which can be celebrated every day. In my four-year tenure, I have embedded myself within the Port Authority as a member and Vice-President of the Network of Black Employees (NBE) to advocate for diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization. As a Senior Compliance Analyst in the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, I advocate on behalf of the diverse small business community to have access to opportunities provided by PANYNJ. The ability to represent the highest levels of talent both internally and externally brings me the greatest sense.



Stacey Gilbert – Senior External Relations Client Manager, Government & Community Relations (New York)

My tenure with the Port Authority began in late 2013, under the tutelage of Brian W. Simon, one of if not the youngest director in the agency at the time and an African American heading the New York side of the Government & Community Relations department. He often reminded me to not be afraid to “take up space,” that my voice, perspective, and experiences as a professional African American woman were valuable and should be heard. Though Black History Month is a time when the contributions of African Americans are formally acknowledged, both my ancestors before me, contemporaries, and upcoming generations continue to blaze trails in a variety of disciplines 365 days a year. During this time in particular, not only do I celebrate the myriad achievements of so many African American greats, I reflect on my desire to continue the legacy of strength, perseverance, excellence, and evolution, both in my own life and among my fellow African Americans.



Russell Jordan – Social Media Strategist, Marketing

Black history is happening all the time and should not be celebrated one month a year. The contribution of black and brown people to both the Port Authority and the world should be documented and made easily accessible so that future leaders can honor, celebrate, and be empowered by the achievements made by those who look like them. Representation is important. I am thankful to present and past PA leaders, including but not limited to Ernesto Butcher, Clarelle DeGraffe, Huntley Lawrence, Jerome Roberson, Willie Mae Williams, and Deloris Scott, for being examples of black excellence. My advice to the next generation is to stay true to yourself. Call out bigotry and intolerance and demand that all treat you with the same level of respect they've earned from you.



Alexis Hargrove – Assistant Director, Passenger Communications & Customer Experience, PATH

Black History Month is more than just a celebration of black achievements and stories; it was a part of my childhood. When I grew up, Saturday morning was a personal development day at my house. My parents were always candid with me. I understood early on that tremendous racial progress had occurred throughout the nation's history, but oppression was still a reality. Now that I am an adult, I value my childhood more because I understand now what those lessons did for me. I realized at an early age life is not always fair, but with struggle, there would be progress. As an adult, I still carry the momentum of my ancestors.



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Cybersecurity Tips for Tax Time 2020

Tax time is here again! To ensure that your most important information is secure, make a checklist of the tax documents you expect to receive from your employer(s), banks, investment accounts, and any other sources. Check to ensure the documents have not been tampered with.

If contacted by phone, validate the person is who they claim to be by calling back a known institutional phone number. Remember, the IRS will never make first contact with you by phone.

Other Tips:

- Be wary of phone calls and emails that are official sounding or time sensitive. Scammers often instill a sense of urgency, hoping you act without thinking.
- If you receive an email from the IRS, think before you click. The IRS will contact you through postal mail before anything else.
- Be very cautious when opening files embedded in emails, especially if the file name is unusual.

If an email seems suspicious, you can report it to the PA Help Desk (212-435-7469) or CSOC (201-216-2880). If possible, attach the suspicious email to a new email and send it to SpamReport@panynj.gov.



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Raymond Bryan – Deputy Chief, Port Authority Police Department

One reflection that resonates with me as we celebrate Black History Month is to recognize and honor the sacrifices, contributions, and accomplishments of African Americans to our country and moreover the world. There is a large challenge one is faced with, remaining confident and persistent to maintain strides and gains to achieve success. Not only once you've achieved the success, but continuing to maintain the perseverance of success as many are so often challenged to do. I include keeping my spiritual faith and belief to cope with doors closed in front of you and ceilings constructed over one's head.



Portia Henry – Program Manager, Major Capital Projects

Women reaching the upper echelon of leadership in the transportation industry – more specifically black women – is still a relatively recent occurrence. Black History Month is a time to reflect that for over 240 years, African Americans were commodified. Another 90 years were marred by overt segregation practices leading up to the Civil Rights Movement, and roughly the last 66 years have been a time period of recognizing 'firsts.' We collectively celebrate such pioneers in transportation and ask: how do we transform their brave pathways of success into blueprints? We all have a role to play to ensure that the firsts are not the last and that authentic leadership, mentorship, sponsorship, career coaching, holistic self-care, and overall technical preparedness are all baked into the framework for black women to be equally equipped and poised for growth when opportunities arise.



Kadeem Short – Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of Emergency Management

Black History Month to me is a time to reflect on those who have faced adversity and struggle, so that someone like myself can be successful in life and given a fair chance to prove what I am capable of. Two people in the agency have inspired me to overcome every struggle and to be my best self: Jerry McCarty (Director of OEM) and Huntley Lawrence (Director of Aviation). I started at the Port Authority in September 2018 and decided to join the PA because of the great veterans' internship program. In my career here, I would like to make an impact, not only on the agency but with my co-workers.



RETIREMENTS

She's going painting! [Come join us for lunch](#) as we wish **Carmen Rein** retirement farewells! Share your well wishes on Thursday, March 19, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 4WTC, 21st floor, Conference Room A&B. Contribute \$35 for brunch and a gift, or \$10 for gift only. Cash payments are due by March 16 to **Jewrel Tomlinson** or **Tatyana Lazebnik**.

Guess who's singing her way to retirement? [Please join us to celebrate](#) at **Pat Gill-Felder's** retirement party! Stop by the HT Maintenance Garage on Thursday, March 26 at 11:30 a.m. Contribute \$25 for lunch and a gift. RSVP with **Angela Reyes** at 201-360-5023 or **Ronny Feeley** at 201-360-5031.

[Come celebrate](#) with **Zenobia Prince**, who is retiring after 33 years of service! Join us on Thursday, March 26 at the Lincoln Tunnel Administrative Building. Contribute \$25 for lunch and a gift. RSVP by March 11 to: **Carla Van Buren** (Lincoln Tunnel) 201-617-8216; **Anne Marie Gentile** (PABT) 201-502-2401; **Jaque Kerney** (SIB) 718-390-2578; **Terry Riva** (GWB) 201-346-4097; or **Angela Ruales** (Holland Tunnel) 201-360-5023.

WORKING ADVANTAGE DISCOUNT PROGRAM

Port Authority employees and retirees can take advantage of hundreds of discounts at stores, theaters, theme parks, and more through Working Advantage, the PA's Employee Discount Program partner. Visit www.workingadvantage.com and use the PA Member ID number – 405042634.



Team Members Wanted for 9/11 Memorial 5K



The PA is putting together a corporate team for the [9/11 Memorial & Museum 5K Run/Walk](#) on April 26. Benefits include access to exclusive Start and Finish Line Lounges, fast-pass privileges at select Community Day activities, and advanced bib delivery – and, of course, the fun, camaraderie and pride that comes from completing a 5K with your colleagues. Space is limited to participate on the corporate team, so move quickly!

Not a runner? Consider volunteering for the PA's booth at the Community Day celebration after the race. Contact **Melissa Abreu** at mabreu@panynj.gov no later than March 9 to sign up for the corporate team, to volunteer, or to [donate to the PA corporate team](#).

And if you're really into running – or hoping to get into it – join the PA's new Running Club, led by Det. **Joshua Maarleveld**, which offers running sessions and events throughout the year. Complete the [membership form](#) and email to jmaarleveld@panynj.gov to join.

GOT NEWS FOR NEXT TIME?

Do you have news from your team, department or employee group to share in the next PA News? Send it to panews@panynj.gov by March 13 to be included in the March 20 issue.

