

Airlines break racial barrier ... gradually

Washington - While airlines still select stewardesses with a great deal of care, racial barriers are rapidly falling throughout the airline industry. But though many are called, few are chosen, regardless of color. A major airline, for example, hires less than 10 per cent of the total number who apply.

These are among the findings about airline stewardesses which appear in an article in the December issue of the U.S. Department of Labor's "Manpower" magazine.

The first black stewardess employed in the industry was brought aboard by Mohawk Airlines in 1957, according to "The Negro in the Air Transport Industry," a study by the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce. She was Ruth Carol Taylor of New York City. Despite this breakthrough, progress was so slow that the study says it could find evidence of only three black stewardesses in the air by 1960.

Federal action speeded things up. A Presidential Executive Order of 1961, "introduced the concept of affirmative action into the field of equal employment opportunity." Six of the major airlines came up with "Plans for Progress" which involved commitment to hire minorities. The final caper was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibited racial discrimination in hiring.

Figures compiled by the Federal Aviation Agency's Office of Civil Rights show that by March, 1971, of the 34, 807 stewardesses employed by the 34 largest airlines representing well over 90 per cent of the industry, 2,185 or 6.3 per cent were minority representatives. Among these, 985 were black.

"Airline management feared that the traveling public would not accept black stewardesses, a fear which has proven totally unwarranted," according to the stu-

dy. "Their acceptance has been extremely good, with few or no racially directed complaints from passengers. The experience of the airlines has been that these young ladies do as good a job as the average white girl hired from the normal sources."

But while black stewardesses have had little trouble with passengers, they have received some flack from management, the Manpower article states. Two years ago, an executive at one of the largest carriers tried to compel a black stewardess to trim her Afro hairdo by a single inch. When she refused, she was fired. It was a costly error on the part of the airline. The young lady settled for \$5,000 in lost wages following a hearing before the Illinois Fair Employment Practices Commission and rejected the company's offer to reinstate her.

"It was the old Hollywood syndrome," said a black executive of one of the major airlines. "But there just aren't that many black folks that look like white folks."

Now that airlines are permitting black stewardesses to look black, and recognizing that minority groups have their distinctive characteristics, he added, recruiting is picking up.

That disadvantaged women can sometimes make good stewardesses has been amply demonstrated by Betty Patterson Gable. After a series of low-paying jobs in Macon, Ga., and Newark, N.J., Mrs. Gable joined the Job Corps and trained at the Los Angeles center.

She wanted to become a helicopter pilot, but the center could not afford to spend the money required for 500 hours of flying. Meanwhile, she trained as a secretary. But the lure of the air was too much. She pestered the airlines until in February, 1967, after a year in the Job Corps, a major airline gave her a chance. She has been a stewardess since.



France's Britt Lafforgne swings through slalom gate here on her way to victory in the Silver Jug World Cup Special Slalom. Miss Macchi, also of France, is that country's leading contender with 176 points in World Cup competition. She will no doubt be a top favorite for the Olympic Gold Metal.

Portland evening school begins

Portland Evening High School this week begins registration for the second semester of classes.

Principal Duane Fiskum said the evening signups will be held in the library of Benson Polytechnic High School, 546 N.E. 12th Avenue. Classes will start at 6:45 p.m. on Jan. 31.

The evening program serves the needs of students under age 21 who need to complete course work leading to a high school diploma and who no longer are attending day high schools.

Fiskum said the program also offers students now attending day high schools the opportunity to make up credits if they have the permission of their day schools.

Curriculum includes all the required subjects in English, social studies, mathematics and science, plus a broad selection of electives in art, calligraphy, bookkeeping, speech, sociology, distributive education, international relations, typing, health, psychology, physical education and auto-mechanics.

Fiskum said an independent study program also permits study of subjects not listed in the regular curriculum. The evening school has 25 instructors and over 450 students.

Further information may be obtained by calling the school office, 232-1186.

Public Station starts talk show

Portland's student-operated public radio station, KBPS (1450), starts its first major weekly talk show next Tuesday with "Schooline: 234-5469".

Mrs. Phyllis Wiener, newly appointed member of the Portland Board of Education, will act as hostess for the program.

The first program will feature questions and answers about homeowners' property tax relief. William Patton, state director, of the Oregon Department of Revenue's tax-relief program, will be on hand to answer questions from listeners.

Radio station supervisor Patricia Swenson sees the program as a continuing information line for individuals with questions about the schools.

The first programs in the series will deal with the property tax relief act and subsequent broadcasts will be more general in nature.

The program will be broadcast from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday evenings and repeated on Saturdays at noon.

Mrs. Wiener said the program would answer questions about finance, growth, school achievement, how schools are managed and planned.

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Salutes Youth of the Week



"Student of the Week" is Finley Hammon, Jr., a senior at Jefferson High School. An athlete, Finley has been a member of the All-City football and basketball teams for the past two years and also plays baseball. He plays the trumpet, piano and guitar.

Finley plans to attend Stanford University, where he will study law. He first became interested in the law through watching Perry Mason on TV and considers this a worthwhile profession for a young black man.

Finley is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Finley Hammon, Sr.

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