

Tanya Bulleigh

Tanya Bulleigh was born in Denver. Her father was a pilot, and she grew up with a Mooney. As a child, she spent plenty of time at the airport, playing in the hangar. She soloed an airplane at the age of 16 and obtained her private pilot certificate at 17. She joined Civil Air Patrol in junior high and remained very active throughout high school. She was the squadron commander and the wing flag team commander during her senior year in high school. She played various sports in high school. She received appointments to the U.S. Naval Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy. She attended the U.S. Air Force Academy for 1.5 years before completing a bachelor's degree of Science at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Upon graduation from college, she went to work for Jeppesen. She worked there as a technical author, helping to edit and write the Guided Flight Discovery Manuals. She moved to Houston, Texas to complete the rest of her flight training. She found employment at Johnson Space Center as an instructor in the space shuttle program, where she trained astronauts and mission control personnel. During this time, she also completed her Master's Degree in Physics at the University of Houston. Mrs. Bulleigh completed additional flight training to include extensive aerobatic training, a tail-wheel endorsement, and a seaplane rating. When the Space Shuttle program ended, she was hired by Mesa Airlines in 2008 as a first officer on the Embraer 145. Unfortunately, due to the economics of 2008, she was furloughed 3 weeks after the hire date and subsequently could not find a job with any other airline. She then flight instructed for one year and flew sky divers in a King Air.

Tanya Bulleigh was hired as a tenure track professor into the Aviation and Aerospace Science Department at Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) in January of 2010 and obtained tenure in 2015, where she met Willie Daniels and was introduced to Shades of Blue. She served as the head coach of the university precision flight team, which competes in the National Intercollegiate Flying Association organization against more than 80 other universities. She led the flight team to win the coveted Loening trophy for the 2010-2011 season, - a trophy awarded to the nation's best aviation program and flight team. She was the faculty advisor for the university's Student Ninety-Nine's chapter, the Students for the Exploration and Development of Space student chapter, as well as the Commercial Spaceflight Federation Student Chapter. During this time, she met many of the young individuals associated with Shades of Blue and gave tours through the simulators at MSU Denver. She saw how inspiring and impactful the Shades of Blue organization was and the incredible difference it made in many lives.

She now still actively teaches 3 classes per semester through an on-line format as an affiliate professor. Tanya was hired as a first officer with Trans States Airlines in June 2015 and held two full time positions for the next three years, until she went to a part-time teaching role in 2018, when she upgraded to Captain at Trans States Airlines. She has raced in the Women's Air Race Classic and previously served on the Women's Air Race Classic board. She was a member of the Technical Advisory Board for Spaceport Colorado. She also volunteered with a local Civil Air Patrol Squadron as the Deputy Commander and Aerospace Officer from 2008 – 2015.

Tanya is now currently a First Officer with United Airlines. During COVID, she returned to work at Johnson Space Center in November 2020, when she thought she might be furloughed from United. She worked as a training lead over the flight controllers at Johnson Space Center while still holding an empty line at United Airlines. She resigned again from NASA in February of 2022 and is now flying again full time, in addition to teaching 3 classes online per semester. She holds an airline transport pilot certificate with an Embraer145 type rating, a Learjet 45 type rating, and an Airbus 320 type rating in addition to Single/Multi-Engine, Instrument and Multi Engine Flight Instructor Certificate and seaplane certification. Tanya has significant tail-wheel time, a seaplane endorsement, and aerobatic experience in multiple aerobatic airplanes. Tanya Bulleigh holds a Master's Degree in Physics from the University of Houston and a Ph.D. in Aviation from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. Her dissertation topic was "Predictive Factors of Depression and Suicidal Tendencies in Commercial Airline Pilots". Shades of Blue has a significant impact on the lives of many young individuals and gives them goals and dreams to work towards. Her service with Shades of Blue helped open the doors at United Airlines for her interview in a timely fashion.