

Washington Named Mississippi Airports Association Professional of the Year

Jackson, Miss.—At its recent annual conference, the Mississippi Airports Association (MAA) named Sam Washington as 2021 Professional of the Year. Washington, who became the Airport Director for Greenville Mid-Delta Airport in 2018, has been involved in airport management for many years.

Nominations for the award come from the membership at large. The candidates are evaluated based on their leadership and contribution to the betterment of aviation in Mississippi and their communities.

“No one is more deserving of this award than Sam,” states MAA President Carol Snapp, Director of Trent Lott International Airport. “He’s made contributions to quality of life both in the communities where he has led airports and across our state through his guidance of this organization during an especially challenging time. As an educator, he has also had a meaningful impact on the future of Mississippi aviation.”

Washington, a longtime MAA board member, has just concluded service as the association’s President. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, he agreed to extend his term to ensure continuity throughout the pandemic.

“Sam steered our organization through the single largest challenge to face aviation in decades – the COVID pandemic,” says Golden Triangle Regional Airport Executive Director Mike Hainsey, one of Washington’s nominators. “He kept the information flowing to help airports throughout the state, and he worked closely with MDOT and the legislature to keep funding flowing to airports through the Multimodal Grant Program.”

Washington was an Instructor in Commercial Aviation at Delta State University for a number of years, teaching hundreds of future airport professionals. He took on the management of Vicksburg Municipal Airport at a time when there was consideration of closing the facility and worked to keep it a safe operation that still serves the region today. Since arriving at Greenville Mid-Delta, Washington has improved the financial and operational position of the airport, including adding destinations such as Dallas, Nashville and New Orleans for travelers in Washington County and the surrounding area. Recently, he was able to upgrade to Contour Airlines which, in association with American Airlines, provides worldwide access from Greenville.

“Sam Washington is the consummate aviation professional who adds value in whatever situation or role he assumes,” says Tom Williams, Meridian Airport Authority President, who also nominated him. “Most important, he’s an honorable man, always guided by the highest of principles. His integrity raises our organization and our profession.”

Washington holds a BBA in management, a master’s degree in commercial aviation and an MBA, all from Delta State. He also owns a consulting firm called Wash 4 Management Group, LLC, and is a licensed pilot.