

Chicago DODO Chapter,
Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.®



The Flight Plan

Vol. XV no. 8 August 2008 Chicago DODO Chapter, P. O. Box 19063, Chicago, IL 60619
Beverly L. Dunjill, President

Carrying on the legend and teaching young people about the opportunities in aviation.

George A. Taylor 1919 ~ 2008

Tuskegee Airman inspired youngsters to take up flying

Engineer, mentor to many earned several honors as member of famed group

By Patricia Trebe | Special to the Chicago Tribune
July 2, 2008

When George A. Taylor first left his hometown of Middlesex, Va., and enlisted in the Army Air Forces to join the Tuskegee Airmen, he did not tell his neighbors and friends of his plans.

"He never told any of them because so many of the blacks were washed out during training," said his wife, Joan. "He didn't want them to know, so when he did get his wings, he went home and shocked everyone."

He became one of the original members of a segregated Army Air Forces unit at the Tuskegee Army Flying School in [Alabama](#) during World War II.

Mr. Taylor, 88, of Chicago, died of prostate cancer Saturday, June 21, in his home.

"George has always been so proud of being a member of the group, but the proudest day was when the airmen were given the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor [in 2007]. He had a small replica made and had it put on a chain and wore it around his neck from that moment on," his wife said.

Mr. Taylor flew more than 50 missions with the 100th Fighter Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group over Italy and was awarded two Bronze Stars, an Air Medal and four battle stars.

"He was a true fighter pilot," said Quentin Smith, a fellow Tuskegee Airman who now lives in Gary. "He was the kind you want leading you or you want on your wing. If he said he was going to be there, he would be there."

After the war, the airmen founded Tuskegee Airmen Inc. in hopes of preserving their legacy and encouraging minority students to enter aviation careers. Mr. Taylor served as a mentor and often spoke to young people during Tuskegee programs.

"Even though he was a fighter pilot, he had a very calming demeanor and he had wonderful advice to give to the youngsters," said Ken Rapiet, chief pilot for the Young Eagles program of the Tuskegee Airmen, which encourages youngsters interested in flying or aeronautical endeavors. "He was always accessible to the youngsters, and it didn't have to be about school. It was about any subject they wanted to talk to him about, and he was sincere in talking to them and interacting with them. . . . He definitely made an impact on these kids."

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Chicago DODO Chapter Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. ®

Mission Statement

"The Chicago "DODO" Chapter of TAI is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization whose mission is to perpetuate the historic legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and to encourage and assist minority youth in pursuing post-secondary education and careers in the aerospace industry."

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Please submit all articles or pictures **no later than the 25th** of each month. Articles will be accepted via fax, as well as via email or in other electronic form. Pictures and other items can be mailed by the above deadline; also preferred to receive in any digital format for better quality printing. Typed or printed submissions are strongly preferred to handwritten ones. Submissions received after the 25th of the month will be included in the following month's issue unless otherwise indicated.

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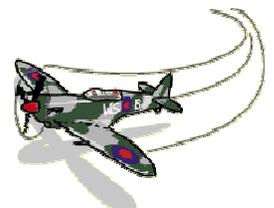
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CALENDAR OF



THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



September 9th @ 6:30pm
TAI Directors Meeting
8134 S. Stony Island

September 13th
@ 9:00am
Young Eagles
Gary-Chicago Airport

September 16th
6:30PM
Chapter Meeting
8134 S. Stony Island

October 11th
@ 9:00am
Young Eagles
Gary-Chicago Airport

October 14th @ 6:30pm
TAI Directors Meeting
8134 S. Stony Island

October 21st
6:30PM
Chapter Meeting
8134 S. Stony Island

**All General Meetings will be held at the New Chicago Public Library
8134 S. Stony Island**

James Baldwin
Novelist and Essayist
Born August 2nd, 1924

Track Star
Jesse Owens
wins four Olympic Gold
Medals at Berlin Games
August 9th, 1936

Judge
Thurgood Marshall
named Solicitor General
August 10th, 1965

President Lincoln
spoke to African American audience at the
White House
August 14th, 1862

Marcus Garvey
Leader of the Universal
Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)
Born August 17th, 1887

M.C. Harvey
Patented the Lantern
August 19th, 1884

Nat Turner
Led Slave Revolt
August 21st, 1831

Guion Bluford
Becomes First African
American Astronaut in
Space
August 30th, 1983



HOTLINES

CHAPTER HOTLINE:
(312) 409-3624

CHICAGO YOUNG EAGLES HOTLINE:
(312) 409-5621

GARY YOUNG EAGLES
HOTLINE: (888) 235-9824
(888) 2FLY—TAI

Note: *Call the Young Eagles Hotline after
7:30 a.m. on the morning of a flight for
any cancellations.*

CHAPTER WEBSITE:
www.taichicago.org

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Note:

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E-Mail Column



Flight Plan Publisher EMAIL is ehoosman@sbcglobal.net

For those of you who wish to start receiving the Flight Plan via email vs. US mail please forward your email address to ehoosman@sbcglobal.net for consideration.

Mr. Jones,
Thank you for your interest in the Tuskegee Airmen --"our Heroes". We welcome every opportunity to showcase these beloved legends. I am forwarding your request to the Central Region President as well as the President and Vice President of the Chicago Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen Inc. I'm sure that you will be contacted very soon. Please feel free to contact me if you need any further assistance.

Thanks again

Robert D. Rose
Tuskegee Airmen Inc,
1st Vice President

Winston Jones
18502 N.W. Montreux Dr.
Issaquah, Wa. 98027

Email winjones@comcast.net
Telephone 425-643-3479

To: Robert D. Rose

July 18, 2008

Dear Mr. Rose:

I am managing the final reunion of the survivors of the 451st Bomb Group WW11. We flew B-24 Liberators out of Southern Italy as part of the Fifteenth Air Force.

Our reunion is being held at the Hyatt Hotel in Deerfield, Illinois in October 2008. If there is one of the survivor Tuskegee pilots living in the Chicago area, we would like to have him address our group for a twenty minute presentation. The ideal time for us would be 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, October 18th, 2008. If this is of interest, we can jointly formulate an outline for the presentation.

Thank you for your consideration of this. Please feel free to call me at (425) 643-3479

Sincerely,
Winston Jones

Boyer to retire, AOPA names new president

By AOPA ePublishing staff



Phil Boyer

Phil Boyer will step down as president of AOPA at the end of the year. Succeeding Boyer will be AOPA member and 40-year pilot Craig L. Fuller, an association, public affairs, and government relations executive.

William C. Trimble III, chairman of the AOPA Board of Trustees, announced Boyer's retirement on June 30.

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Story by Ken Rapier

Additional source info on the Convention from "The Keokuk Daily Gate"

news at:

<http://www.dailygate.com/articles/2008/07/14/news/07.txt>



Spotter planes for bomb drops? Flying formations? Liaison pilots? These words are all associated with the 18th annual International L-Bird Convention held in Keokuk, Iowa July 24-26.

The annual L-Bird Conventions have brought together pilots, aircraft and enthusiasts of liaison and spotter planes used since World War I.

Aircraft expected to be at this year's gathering include the Cessna L-19 (bird dog), L-17 (Navion), L-3, L-5, L-21, PT-19 and the O-2. Forty to 50 of these vintage and restored aircraft will be at the Keokuk Municipal Airport during the convention. The event has become a favorite stop for the pilots of these aircraft.

The Flight Team of the Chicago Chapter of TAI participated in the convention this year and took part in the Joint Liaison Formation Committee (JLFC) formation training school. The two events have been held simultaneously for the last 18 years, scheduled the week before the AirVenture in Oshkosh. It's used as a stop-over point for liaison pilots flying their airplanes up to Oshkosh. Formation training takes place as well because many of the pilots fly in the air show formations over Oshkosh on War Bird days.

Lindner Aviation of Keokuk serves as host and organizer of the International L-Bird Pilots Association annual convention, which has been held in Keokuk since being lured to Keokuk by Irv Lindner in 1989.

In 1991, the Liaison's Pilot Association merged with the Bird-Dog Association to become the International Liaison Pilot's Association and have voted each year to return to Keokuk. The gathering gives spectators an opportunity to see and appreciate these aircraft, which were an important part of the war efforts of the past 75 years.

This year's convention culminated with an annual awards banquet, where our own Dr. Welton Taylor was honored by serving as the guest speaker.

As a WWII liaison pilot, Dr. Taylor had many stories to relate to the current, non-WWII owner/pilots of the many liaison aircraft on hand for the convention such as the Stearman, L-5 (Cubs), L-17 (Navions) L-19 (Cessna Bird Dogs), and Yaks. Tuskegee Flight Team pilots attending the training sessions were Vic Crosswell, Ken Rapier, Keith Renfroe and Marvin Robinson. Dr. Taylor was warmly received by all of the attending liaison pilots who treated him to several flights that began the moment we landed. His first flight was in an L-17 with retired airline pilot, Dave Hooper. Brian Flax, FedEx pilot and Bird Dog driver, who coordinated efforts to get Dr. Taylor to Keokuk as the honored guest of the JLFC/ILPA convention, complimented Dr. Taylor during the awards banquet, on his sharp flying skills. He noted that Dr. Taylor obviously hasn't lost a thing as far as flying skills are concerned.

The convention draws annually 80 to 120 people and 35 to 55 aircraft.

Previous planes have included: L-19 (Bird Dog), L-17 (Navion), L-2, L-3, L-4, L-5, L-6, L-13, L-21, PT-17 (Stearman), PT-19, PT-22, O-2, AT-6, and a Mohawk, among others. The countries represented at past conventions have been Canada, Australia, New Zealand, England and Switzerland. This year, Dr. Taylor flew lead with Ken Rapier, for the redtails. Their call sign was "Tuskegee Flight", going and returning from the gathering. Can you believe it? Our chapter's pair of red-tail Tuskegee Airmen aircraft replicas received almost as much attention as Dr. Taylor himself.

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Born the youngest and only boy of five children, Mr. Taylor graduated from high school in 1938 and went to [Virginia](#) State University in [Petersburg](#) for three years before he decided to enlist.

After the war he came to Chicago, entered the [Curtiss-Wright](#) School of Aeronautical Engineering and graduated in 1950. While going to school he worked at the post office.

"It was there that he met my brother," who, his wife said, introduced Mr. Taylor to her—"but we separated and our paths didn't come together for another 34 years."

In 1950, Mr. Taylor joined the water reclamation district and worked as chief engineer on the first Deep Tunnel projects at [La Grange](#) Road and Illinois Highway 171 near Hodgkins, said Harold Smith, former supervisor civil engineer.

"I really respected him and he was someone I could look up to," Smith said. "He was my mentor. At that time there were very few black engineers in 1968 or 1969. . . . He was a good role model."

"And he was really thorough in just about everything he did. Every thing was in order and well-organized and he kept things under control. He was soft-spoken, but you knew when he said something, he meant it," Smith said.

A longtime bachelor, Mr. Taylor was reintroduced to his friend's sister and the pair hit it off. The couple married in 1986, the same year he retired.

"From our experience, I tell young people, just realize that you can have a love affair later in life and that is the best one you can have," his wife said. "That is the most wonderful happening in my life. We were free and we were able to travel to all parts of the world."

Mr. Taylor was a treasurer of the Chicago Tuskegee Airmen Inc. and the former national chairman of the committee on nominations of Tuskegee Airmen Inc.

Other survivors include his stepdaughter, Susan Chatman; and a sister, Otelia Payne.

Here SHE is, the USS New York, made from the World Trade Center !

USS New York

It was built with 24 tons of scrap steel from the World Trade Center .

It is the fifth in a new class of warship - designed for missions that include special operations against terrorists. It will carry a crew of 360 sailors and 700 combat-ready Marines to be delivered ashore by helicopters and assault craft.

Steel from the World Trade Center was melted down in a foundry in Amite , LA to cast the ship's bow section. When it was poured into the molds on Sept 9, 2003, 'those big rough steelworkers treated it with total reverence,' rec allied Navy Capt. Kevin Wensing, who was there. 'It was a spiritual moment for everybody there.'

Junior Chavers, foundry operations manager, said that when the trade center steel first arrived, he touched it with his hand and the 'hair on my neck stood up.' 'It had a big meaning to it for all of us,' he said. 'They knocked us down. They can't keep us down. We're going to be back.'

The ship's motto? 'Never Forget'



Submitted by: *Barbra Werner*

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L-Bird Convention set July 24-26

Published: Monday, July 14, 2008 2:33 PM CDT For the Daily Gate City

L-Birds? Bird dogs? Bomb drop? Flying formations? Liaison pilots? These words are all associated with the 18th annual International L-Bird Convention in Keokuk July 24-26.

The L-Bird Convention brings together pilots, aircraft and enthusiasts of liaison and spotter planes used since World War I. Aircraft expected to be at this year's gathering include the Cessna L-19 (bird dog), L-17 (Navion), L-3, L-5, L-21, PT-19 and the O-2. Forty to 50 of these vintage and restored aircraft will be at the Keokuk Municipal Airport during the convention. The event has become a favorite stop for the pilots of these aircraft.

Lindner Aviation of Keokuk serves as host and organizer of the International L-Bird Pilots Association annual convention, which has been held in Keokuk since being lured to Keokuk by Irv Lindner in 1989. In 1991, the Liaison's Pilot Association merged with the Bird-Dog Association to become the International Liaison Pilot's Association and have voted each year to return to Keokuk. The gathering gives spectators an opportunity to see and appreciate these aircraft, which were an important part of the war efforts of the past 75 years.



A pancake breakfast will be held at 7:30 am Saturday, July 26, and will provide an opportunity to see the planes and meet the pilots that fly them. On Saturday morning, bomb drop and spot landing competition begins, testing the abilities of both the aircraft and pilots.

Last year, ILPA convention attendees, representing 28 states and three foreign countries, pumped approximately \$150,000 into the local economy.

"The participants love Keokuk and have adopted it as their home away from home for this convention," said former Keokuk resident and International Bird Dog Association life member Keith Carter.

The difference between the two conventions was the bird dog was a Cessna L-19 that was used as a spotter plane during the Vietnam War. The Liaison Pilots Association included all aircraft used in the different wars.

The convention in Keokuk is a get-together for pilots on their way to Oshkosh, Wis., to have some flying fun, food, flying stories and relaxation before the final leg to Oshkosh. Oshkosh begins July 28.

The convention draws 80 to 120 people and 35 to 55 aircraft. The planes include L-19 (Bird Dog), L-17 (Navion), L-2, L-3, L-4, L-5, L-6, L-13, L-21, PT-17 (Stearman), PT-19, PT-22, O-2, AT-6, and Mohawk.

The countries represented have been Canada, Australia, New Zealand, England and Switzerland

Young Eagles Column



June 14th, 2008. Flag Day and International Young Eagles Day and a beautiful day it was. Sunny, clear skies with unlimited visibility and light winds. A perfect day for pilots Butch Bejna, Vic Crosswell, Joe Gmitter, Mark Odeen, Ken Rapier and Dan Skoda to team up with volunteers Rhonda Buss, Don Clay, Clarence Holland, Julius Jackson, Wil Johnson, Moses Jones, Hilton Joseph, Melvin Knazze, Bob Mullins, Keith Renfroe, Carl Robinson, Vince Saunders, LaVerne Shelton, Welton Taylor, Karon Thompson, Mary Ward, Barb Werner, Milt Williams and Paul Wilson to fly 34 Young Eagles. The pilots and volunteers started the day with coffee doughnuts, sweet rolls and breakfast sausage sandwiches. The afternoon closed with chili, hot wings, ribs, chips, cole slaw, carrots, celery, watermelon and birthday cake for Don Clay. This is what happens when the volunteer cooks give Rob Strickland a day off from the grill. Our thanks to Don,

Vic, Karon, Mary and Barb for providing such a delightful feast. A good time was had by all. You were invited to join us so it's your fault if you missed it. Okay, you get one more shot at it. June 28th is Volunteer Appreciation Day. Join us at the airport for lunch at Noon for some good food and socializing. Why not bring your significant other to meet the rest of the Team? You're invited to fly in, drive in or walk in, just join in.
Happy Flyin'!

Ken Rapier, Chief Pilot
Tuskegee Airmen Young Eagles Program



TUSKEGEE AIRMEN GROUP LOOKING FOR SUPPORT

The Tuskegee Airmen, the first African American fighter pilots, recently received the group's second congressional recognition. With the conclusion of Black History Month, the group knows full well that its veterans are dwindling in numbers. Hoping that the legacy will not die with them, the nonprofit [Tuskegee Airmen Inc.](#) is looking for dedicated people to join the organization and carry out its mission of inspiring young people to achieve goals and take on leadership roles in society.

The Chicago "DODO" Flight, call sign: Tuskegee Flight, did the unofficial opening of the Gary Airshow on Saturday, July 12 and Sunday, July 13. The flight team of Vic Crosswell, Ken Rapier, Keith Renfroe and Marvin Robinson dedicated the performances for the two days to Original Tuskegee Airmen George Taylor, 100th Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group, who transitioned on June 28, 2008. The flight team has been doing an "unofficial opening" of the Gary Air Show for the past nine years because despite having met all of the criteria to be listed as performers in the regular air show, it seems that these are the only airplanes in the air show that tell a story (that would be the story of the Tuskegee Airmen) and the promoters of the air show would prefer that story not be told. Photo by Joel Love.



Ken Rapier, Chief Pilot
Tuskegee Airmen Young Eagles Program



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When Boyer took the controls in 1991 (only the third president in AOPA's 69-year history), the GA industry was in crisis, beaten down by product liability lawsuits. He helped pass the General Aviation Revitalization Act, which turned around aircraft manufacturing. He also championed civilian use of GPS and WAAS, and later ADS-B to benefit general aviation.

Boyer upgraded AOPA management and member service, resulting in a 40-percent membership growth, despite declining pilot numbers. His new ventures funded novel GA advocacy and member benefits, while holding AOPA dues to \$39.

Craig L. Fuller

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Tuskegee Airmen Visit Lexington

Saturday, 09 August 2008 22:38

A few of the legendary Tuskegee airmen made an appearance in Lexington at Applebee's Park. The Lexington Legends hosted the four decorated veterans, who were among the first African American airmen for the U.S. during World War Two.

They shared their experiences fighting in the war abroad and fighting segregation and racism in the United States.

One of the visitors to Applebee's Park is a World War Two fighter pilot. He said despite some negative experiences in his life, he would not change a thing. Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Jefferson says he is proud to be an American.

Members of the Lexington chapter of Tuskegee airmen were also on hand to answer questions and meet fans.

KUDOS... to the members of the working staff of the Noel Parrish Chapter of TAI and RSETA, especially to Dan Wooten and John Croft the co-chairs of this event.

Other BGNFP members were Lynne Fuller, Charles Walker, Bill McAtee, Tajee Smith and Tabitha Croft. Other family members assisting were Rewa Smith, Chuck Fuller and Caroline Walker.

DOTAs were: LaVerne Shelton, Bob Martin (Chicago), Al Jefferson (Detroit) and Frank Weaver (Louisville). Alvin LaRue was supposed to come but fell too ill for the drive.

Each DOTA received a City Proclamation and keys to the city, along with a Tuskegee Airmen Memorial Trail sign and a tote bag full of gifts from a variety of local businesses.

This was a night that all who participated will never forget. Lexington and the Lexington Legends really rolled out the carpet for our visiting DOTAs. Photos will come in a few days.

Submitted by: Ron Spriggs

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"Phil informed the board some four years ago that he would retire in three years," said Trimble. "We convinced him to continue his extraordinary leadership of AOPA for another year. Now, we must move on, but AOPA and the entire general aviation community are in a better place for his inspired 18 years at the controls."

Said Boyer, "I have made no secret in the aviation community that I have had a retirement plan for several years. And I wanted to make sure prior to stepping down I was leaving a world-class set of AOPA organizations and the best management team to continue our leadership position in general aviation advocacy, information, and education.

"At the end of this year, I will be able to 'get my life back' and enjoy fully the general aviation that AOPA fights so hard to preserve for its member pilots. Every great team needs a coach, every great business needs a CEO, and every great association needs a president. I am delighted Craig will captain AOPA on the 'next leg' of this remarkable journey to preserve and advance general aviation."

Craig L. Fuller has held top positions in the White House, a national trade association, a Fortune 50 corporation, and in global consulting and public affairs firms. He is currently an executive vice president at APCO Worldwide, a global public affairs and strategic communications company with offices in Washington, D.C., and major cities throughout the world.

Flying has always been a part of his career. He earned his private certificate at age 17. After graduating from UCLA with a degree in political science and earning a master's degree in urban studies from Occidental College, he joined the public affairs consulting firm of Deaver and Hannaford, founded by two principal assistants to then California Gov. Ronald Reagan, Mike Deaver, and Peter Hannaford. He frequently flew Cessna Skyhawks and Skylanes and Grumman Tigers to client meetings in California and Arizona. He later bought a Cessna 172RG Cutlass.

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Airmen, families, friends pay tribute to fallen Tuskegee Airmen



Airman 1st Class Bekah Phy
305th Air Mobility Wing public affairs

7/21/2008 - **PHILADELPHIA** -- Airmen, family and friends paid tribute to fallen Tuskegee Airmen during a Lonely Eagles Memorial Service ceremony July 18 here. The ceremony was part of the 37th Tuskegee Airmen Convention continuing through July 20.

"This ceremony pays tribute, respect and honor to our fallen members who joined the Lonely Eagles Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., between August 2007 and July 2008," said Maj. (ret.) Sharon Hunter, 514th Air Mobility Wing elite honor guard, McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., during opening remarks. "... We are honored to have with us veterans from all services; retired, Reserve, Guard and active duty, but most of all, we are honored to have our most treasured veterans, the original Tuskegee Airmen."

Russell Davis, president of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., also spoke during the ceremony. "We start off this set of activities we call the Tuskegee Airmen Convention giving praise to those who have gone before us. Those who are deceased during the past twelve months should be honored, and we think we have a very fitting way in which to pay tribute to them for their lives, their commitment to the country, and for their sacrifice," he said. "... I'm so glad to see so many active-military people here because they need to understand what it's all about and know the names of those who have helped pave the way for all of us."

During the ceremony, George Watson, Sr., an original Tuskegee Airman, read the names of the fallen. The ringing of a bell followed each name, and those in the audience who knew the deceased Airman stood in their honor.

"The men and women we commemorate today are the men and women who served in the Army Air Corps during the 1940s at Tuskegee Army Airfield or in units at other locations that emanated from the Tuskegee experience," Major Hunter said. "... May these 'Lonely Eagles' rest in eternal peace."

A flag-fold ceremony was then held by the 514th AMW elite honor guard in honor of the men and women who put their lives on the line each day and for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the past.

"... Today, the American flag, 'Old Glory', represents those Tuskegee Airmen who passed away since the last convention, and we are unaware of their passing," Major Hunter said. "It also represents the unknown Soldier, our troops who are selflessly devoted and committed to defending our country and for those serving our country on foreign soil in the name of freedom."



James Carter
William Cornish
Craig Cousins
Leroy Criss, Jr.
John Davis
Russell Desvignes Sr.
Charles Dryden Sr.
Harry English
Jerry Eure Sr.
Harold Gauden
Weldon Groves
Luther Higginbotham
Charles Hunter
John Johnson
Hercules Joyner
Andrew Keyes Sr.
Lee Roy Kirksey
Donald Lang Sr.
Gilbert Langford
Robert Lawrence
Richard Macon

The following Tuskegee Airmen were recognized for their service:

Earl Middleton
Louis Murray
Edward Nichols
Matt Plummer Sr.
William Richardson
Roderick Ross Sr.
Yancey Rowe Jr.
George Sherman
Leon "Woodie" Spears
George Taylor
Lucius Theus
Thomas Tindall
Calvin Warrick
Morris Washington Sr.
William Watkins Jr.
John Willis
Fred Wilson

Tuskegee Airmen, Incorporated is the national organization that works to honor the accomplishments and perpetuate the history of the legendary young African-American men who enlisted during World War II to become America's first black military airmen, ground crew and mechanics.

The Tuskegee Airmen were young men who enlisted at a time when there were many people who thought that black men lacked intelligence, skill, courage and patriotism. They came from every section of the country, with large numbers coming from New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Washington, D.C.

The surviving Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in March 2007, the most distinguished award bestowed by Congress. The convention offers a chance to meet these American heroes.

TAI has 51 chapters worldwide. For more information, visit www.tuskegeearmen.org.

August 20, 2008

To: Debra Rice and TAI Educational Assistance Committee



Dear Debra and the TAI EAC,

I wish to express my gratitude to all of you for your assistance in making my first year of college, as unconventional as it was, a success. Please allow me to elaborate briefly on my first year and share with you some highlights from it.

My first semester at Pomona College was marked by various wonderful experience and great classes, but also finding out that they didn't have the correct programs that I needed for my prospective majors, and having multiple family emergencies occur back home. This is what prompted my return to Chicago and my attendance at Loyola University Chicago for the spring semester of 2008.

My plan for the second semester was to take 5 courses at Loyola, and reapply to a few transfer schools: University of Southern California and Northwestern University, specifically.

I am proud to report my earning of a 3.54 GPA, which granted me the distinction of being named to Loyola's College of Arts and Sciences' Dean's List. I also am proud to report acceptance at both USC and Northwestern. It is my decision to attend Northwestern University as a student within both the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and the Medill School of Journalism for the remainder of my undergraduate education. Northwestern was my dream school during high school and I am more than prepared to take on the big challenge that I know Northwestern will be.

Since returning to Chicago in winter 2007, I have been involved in numerous activities outside of school. In December 2007, I began volunteering at events, and departments for the National Campaign Headquarters of Democratic Presidential Nominee Sen. Barack Obama. I remain involved with the campaign, although limited during the summer.

This summer, I have been involved in two organizations for summer employment. In June I began my current stint as the Information Services/Knowledge Management Intern at Kirkland & Ellis, LLP, an international law firm and the top-ranked Chicago-based law firm. I also served, for the second consecutive summer, as a Junior Instructor at the Chicago Debate League's Chicago Debate Summer Institute (CDSI). I have thoroughly enjoyed both involvements, and this will be a summer to remember as I go back into my studies.

Without your financial support for my freshman year, I cannot say for certain if my ability to succeed would have been possible. Again, I extend my gratitude to all of you for selecting me as a scholarship recipient, and for your support. I hope to remain in touch.

Respectfully submitted,

Derrick Brandon Clifton, Jr.

Northwestern University '11

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When Reagan was elected president, Fuller joined the new administration as the assistant to the president for cabinet affairs. And he flew his 172RG from California to the East Coast, ultimately basing the aircraft at AOPA's home field in Frederick, Md.

In 1985, Vice President George H.W. Bush asked Fuller to be his chief of staff. He was part of the team that managed Bush's presidential campaign, and he co-chaired the transition operation when Bush became president.

Fuller returned to the private sector, with high-level positions at several public affairs/government relations firms, and as head of worldwide public affairs for a Fortune 50 company. In 1999, he became the president and CEO of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS). And he bought a Beechcraft Bonanza A36, in which he logged more than 200 hours a year speaking at events and meeting with NACDS members.

The AOPA Board of Trustees' search committee began looking for AOPA's new leader last year, hiring the national search firm Heidrick & Struggles to help identify final candidates from among 597,000 U.S. pilots.

"After hundreds of interviews and a painstaking review of 100 potential candidates, it was clear that Craig Fuller, a recognized leader in business, public affairs, and association management, would be ideally suited to carry on Phil's tremendous legacy," said Trimble. "Craig is a committed 40-year pilot, aircraft owner, and AOPA member. He is as comfortable with fellow pilots and 'hangar talk' as he is facing a congressional committee."

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“Being selected by the trustees as only the fourth president of AOPA in 70 years is a tremendous honor and a serious responsibility,” said Fuller. “I am fully dedicated to ensuring that the best days of general aviation remain ahead of us. And AOPA is ready with a strong organization bolstered over two challenging decades by an individual we all admire.”

Trimble said, “Phil Boyer transformed the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association into a forward-thinking and tech-savvy leader for vastly changed times in general aviation. The GA community will remember Phil’s remarkable contributions that prepared us for the twenty-first century.

“Phil orchestrated regulatory and legislative backing for civil aviation use of GPS satellite navigation, led consumer support for aviation product liability reform that was decisive in Congress, and averted onerous user fees during three FAA reauthorizations,” said Trimble.

“Moreover, he facilitated general aviation’s return to the skies following a long post-9/11 grounding by talking sense—and common-sense cooperative programs—with lawmakers and security officials.”

Fuller is to take office on Jan. 1, 2009, following formal election at the trustees’ September Annual Meeting of Members. He and Boyer will be working together on the transition for the remainder of this year.

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