

BLACK and WHITE UNVEILED Tuskegee Airmen

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Article by RSETA, Inc, Kentucky



General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., was the commander of the all black 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group of WWII. Later, he commanded the 477th Composite Group at Godman Field near Louisville, KY.



Photo Courtesy of: Ed Murphy, AMK



Brigadier General Noel F. Parrish, born in Versailles, KY, was the white commander of cadet training at Tuskegee during WWII. General Parrish was inducted into the Aviation Museum of Kentucky's Hall of Fame.

Before a crowd of over 100 attendees at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Aviation Museum of Kentucky, Saturday December 7, 2013. Ron Spriggs, AMK Board of Directors Member and Executive Director of the Ron Spriggs Exhibit of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. unveiled and installed busts honoring two historical Tuskegee Airmen.

The sculpted busts of General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. and Kentucky born Brigadier General Noel F. Parrish were two iconic Tuskegee Airmen commanders during WWII. These historic creations were designed and sculpted by AMK Board Member and Associate Art Professor, Bobby Scroggins from the University of Kentucky.

This project was sponsored through the generosity of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs.



Prof. Scroggins



Benjamin Oliver Davis, Jr. was born 1912 in Washington D.C. He became a 2nd generation Army member, following in the footsteps of his father the senior, who himself was a Buffalo Soldier had climbed the ranks from enlisted to become America's first Black General Grade officer.

B.O. Davis, Jr. attended West Point was shunned for the 4 years as a cadet, went on to graduate 35th in a class of 276 in 1936. As a Captain he joined the first class of 13 cadets at Tuskegee in 1941. He qualified as a pilot in 1942; only 5 pilots graduated from the program in the class of 42-C-SE.

General Davis was the first black to be promoted to the rank of General in the USAF and retired as a Lt. General. In 1998, by an act of Congress in a ceremony presided over by President Clinton, General Davis was advanced to the rank of General, USAF in the retired status. Davis died in 2002.

Noel Francis Parrish was born 1909 in Versailles KY, moved to Waco Texas, studied at Rice University. Entered the Army calvary (with real horses) as a Private and later became a pilot. Later he was assigned at Tuskegee Institute and became the Commander of Cadet training.

He was just one of a handful of white Tuskegee Airmen throughout the Tuskegee Airmen era of 1941-1949. His name was chartered in 2007 as the B/Gen. Noel F. Parrish Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., in Lexington, KY.

The prestigious "Brigadier General Noel F. Parrish Award" was so named by the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., National organization due to Parrish's efforts to desegregate his troops, reduce over-crowding, increase morale and improve relations between Tuskegee's residents and the inhabitants of the base. Parrish died in 1987.