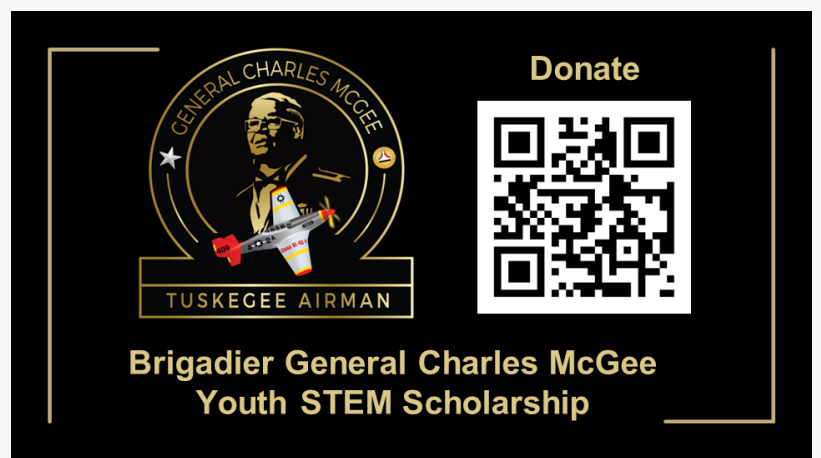


Gen Charles McGee Black History Month Program Honors Legacy of Famed Tuskegee Airmen and Raises Funds for STEM students

The Brigadier General Charles McGee Scholarships aim to increase the STEM pipeline for underserved youth

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, UNITED STATES, February 23, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Program and Scholarship Fundraiser. The much anticipated 1-hour video premieres February 25, at 10 AM on YouTube at mcgeebhm.iul1906.org or link to the video via www.charlesmcgeestem.org. The General Charles McGee video will continue airing for six months.



General Charles McGee STEM Youth Scholarship

The premier includes previously non-public video footage highlighting General Charles McGee's life journey, National Aviation Hall Fame induction speech, memories shared by his children, his involvement with Alpha Phi Alpha, and remarks by Montgomery County Maryland Councilmember Will Jawando.

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The premier includes non-public video footage of General Charles McGee, memories shared by Alpha Phi Alpha and memories by his children that are inspiring and uplifting”

Steve Ruffin, McGee STEM Scholarship Chair

About Charles McGee

Charles Edward McGee was born in Cleveland, Ohio on December 7, 1919, to Lewis Allen and Ruth Elizabeth Lewis McGee. His father was a Methodist minister and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

After graduating from Chicago's DuSable High School in 1938, Charles earned money for college by working in the Civilian Conservation Corp. Charles enrolled at University of Illinois-Urbana in 1939, joined the ROTC and was a member of the Persian Rifles. There he met the love of his life, Francis Nelson. Charles was a member of the Boy Scouts of America and earned the Eagle Scout

award on August 9, 1940.

Charles was initiated into Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Tau chapter on December 1, 1940. He and Frances were married on October 17, 1942. Charles and Frances had three children: Charlene, Ronald and Yvonne.

After his military service, in 1978 at the age of 58, Charles completed his degree at Columbia College in Kansas City, over thirty years after his enlistment during World War II. Charles served as the Director of the Kansas City airport, a member of the Aviation Advisory Commission and was active in the Beta Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha.

After moving to Montgomery County, Maryland, Charles was active in the Iota Upsilon Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha and its 501(c)(3) Smithville School Museum and Education Center for nearly 30 years. There he mentored three generations of Alpha men and inspired thousands of STEM students and millions of Americans.

Charles entered Omega chapter on January 16, 2022, at age 102. Along with his family and distinguished guests, many senior military leaders attended the service on June 17, 2022 at Fort Belvoir Chapel to bid a final farewell. This included Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall, and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown, Jr. A horse drawn carriage carried him from the chapel to Arlington National Cemetery where he received military funeral honors with funeral escort and was laid to rest.

Military Accomplishments

Charles enlisted in the US Army on October 26, 1942, where he earned a pilot training slot in the experimental colored Civilian Pilot Training program at Tuskegee Army Airfield and the 99th Pursuit Fighter Squadron. This was the precursor to the 332nd Fighter Group, which later became known as the Tuskegee Airmen. He graduated in Class 43-F on June 30, 1943.



Brigadier General McGee



By February 1944, Charles was stationed in Italy with the 301st Fighter Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group, flying his first mission on February 14. He flew the Bell P-39Q Airacobra, Republic P-47D Thunderbolt and North American P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft, escorting Consolidated B-24 Liberator and Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers over Germany, Austria and the Balkans. During missions, he also engaged in low level attacks over enemy airfields and rail yards. On August 23, 1944, while escorting B-17s over Czechoslovakia, Charles engaged a formation of Luftwaffe fighters and downed a Focke Wulf 190.

Now promoted to Captain, between February and December 1944, Charles had flown a total of 137 combat missions. He returned to the United States on December 1, 1944 to become an instructor on the North American B-25 Mitchell bombers that another unit of the Tuskegee Airmen were working up to deploy to the Pacific Theater. He remained at Tuskegee Army Air Field until 1946, when the base was closed.

After World War II, Charles was sent to Lockbourne Air Field. He became the base operation and training officer, later in 1948.

When the Korean War broke out, Charles flew P-51 Mustangs again in the 67th Fighter Bomber Squadron. He completed 100 missions and was promoted to the rank of major. Continuing his service with the United States Air Force as it was reconstituted, Charles continued to serve as a fighter pilot, flying Lockheed F80 Shooting Star and Northrop F-89 Scorpion aircraft.

During the Vietnam War, Charles was promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel. He flew 172 combat missions in a McDonnell RF-4 photoreconnaissance aircraft. During his amazing 30-year active service career, Charles flew 409 fighter combat missions in World War II, Korea and Vietnam and holds the record for the highest total of any pilot in U.S. Air Force history.

After a series of other appointments both in the United States as well as in Italy and Germany, and promotion to Colonel, Charles retired on January 31, 1973. He ended his military career with 6,308 flying hours.

Awards and Recognition

Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Legion of Merit with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star, Air Medal with 25 Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Korean Presidential Unit Citation, Hellenic Republic World War II Commemorative Medal along with related campaign and service ribbons. Tuskegee Airmen Congressional Gold Medal (2007); induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame (2011); consultant to the George Lucas film "Red Tails" (2012); Tuskegee Airmen Incorporated National President (2 terms); pinned with his 75 year membership pin by Alpha Phi Alpha's 34th General President (2015); presented coin toss at Superbowl 2020 pregame ceremonies; 2020 National Defense Authorization Act honorary promoted to the rank of Brigadier General; President Trump pinned on his stars in the Oval

Office, recognized later that day at the State of the Union (2020);

In 2020, he was present for the Alpha Phi Alpha launch of the McGee Youth STEM Scholarship as a living monument to honor his legacy. He was among the first people to contribute.

Steve Ruffin

Alpha Phi Alpha General Charles McGee STEM Youth Scholarship

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