

faced rampant discrimination even after serving their country honorably. Former B-25 pilot Bill Broadwater scored so high on a civilian pilot test that a major airline could not ignore him, but they refused to hire him because no one would fly with a Black pilot.³ Maryland students, politicians, and military personnel need to know these and other truths about the Airmen.

All we are asking for is a date on the calendar. We are not asking for a holiday, just a date so that your grandchildren will know that the fourth Thursday in March holds a special place in the history of the Army Air Corps. Why? Because, on March 22, 1941, the 99th Pursuit Squadron was stood up at Chanute Field. It is fitting to note that aircraft maintenance personnel were the first to be trained in this Army experiment. Later, the 99th relocated to Tuskegee, and pilot training commenced in July 1941. The first class of Black Army Air Corps pilots earned their wings on March 7, 1942.

Thank you for listening to my testimony in favor of Senate Bill 20, a measure that will benefit Maryland by improving awareness of our connected history, and shining a bright light on the ground-breaking contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Signed,

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³ Bill Broadwater told this airline rejection story often. Avis Thomas Lester, "William Broadwater, Tuskegee Airmen, dies at 89," *Washington Post*, Oct 12, 2015, <https://www.stripes.com/news/us/william-broadwater-tuskegee-airman-dies-at-89-1.372886>.

That is where you come in. As I said, not everyone has an Uncle Noah to educate them about the thousands of men and women who participated in the Tuskegee Experience. Nonetheless, this body can ensure that students and residents across Maryland are aware of the Tuskegee Airmen.

In my opinion, all Marylanders should be aware that Brigadier General Charles McGee, who flew over 400 combat missions during three wars, lives in Montgomery County; that DOTA Herbert Jones, Jr.—who once kept a surplus Army airplane in his back yard and started an international airline, lives in Prince George’s County;¹ that Bill Broadwater, a pioneering Air Traffic Controller and FAA senior administrator, was once a B-25 pilot at Tuskegee; that Charles Herbert Flowers, Jr., for whom a Prince George’s County High School is named, was also an Original Airman, as was James Pryde— a former B-25 radio operator and a Cryptologic Hall of Honor inductee at NSA.² The list goes on: Lemuel Lewie, Jr. of Baltimore, Edward James Talbert of Suitland, Dr. Ivan Ware, Bill Wilson, and I am only naming a few of the Marylanders who are counted as Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen. Sadly, many of these pioneers are no longer with us.

Maryland youth should also know that recruits on their way to Tuskegee had to move to the soot-filled Jim Crow car at Union Station; that the Army, rather than use existing training bases less than 30 miles away, spent millions of dollars to construct Tuskegee Army Airfield so that no White enlisted troop would have to salute a Black officer. That highly qualified men and women

¹ DOTA William T. Fauntroy, Jr often mentions the BT-13 Vultee trainer that Jones stored in his back yard. Jones was also a member of the pioneering Black aviators’ group known as the Cloud Club, which founded Croom Field, <http://www.pgparcs.com/3182/History>.

² James Pryde was a 2006 Cryptologic Hall of Honor Inductee, <https://www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic-heritage/historical-figures-publications/hall-of-honor/Search/Pryde/>.

University. He was raised on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in Wetipquin, along with his three siblings: Novella, Jessie, and Noah.

As a child, my most visible introduction to aviation was watching Freeway Airport's light aircraft buzz over Route 50 during my family's many trips to Annapolis. When I received an Air Force ROTC Scholarship during my last year of high school, my Uncle Noah—my grandfather's brother—sat me down and gave me a history lesson about the Tuskegee Airmen.

Uncle Noah—Noah Percy Moore--was in the Army Air Corps, assigned at Tuskegee from 1944-45—not as a pilot; he was the Mess Officer. Before I went to college, he made certain that I knew flying was an option for me because of what the Tuskegee Airmen had accomplished during World War II.

Forty years ago, I guess I thought everyone had an Uncle Noah at home, or in their family somewhere. But obviously everyone does not. Today, as the numbers of Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen diminish, keeping their legacy vibrant is the responsibility of those of us who have benefitted from their sacrifices and successes.

When I say “benefitted,” perhaps some may think that I am speaking only about African Americans, but the truth is that *America* has benefitted from the Tuskegee Airmen—all Americans. We are a stronger country when we embrace, rather than dismiss diversity. The Tuskegee Airmen standard of excellence opened America's eyes to that truth, although the work of building a cohesive and diverse nation is certainly not complete.

Testimony of Monica R. Smith in support of SB20 (HB716)

General Provisions – Commemorative Days – Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day

February 27, 2020

Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, Senator Patterson, and members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee (EHE), thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Bill 20 (Cross-filed as HB 716 in the House Health and Government Operations Committee), General Provisions – Commemorative Days – Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day. This important piece of legislation ensures that Maryland will perpetually honor the Tuskegee Airmen and their contributions to the United States of America.

As my colleagues Jerry Burton and Rosemary Crockett have stated, the District of Columbia and the State of Virginia passed similar legislation before our chapter's first Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day. As a Maryland resident, I am looking forward to *my* state properly recognizing the significant contributions of the Airmen by authorizing a remembrance date on the calendar each year.

I am here as a private citizen, but I am also a former Air Force pilot. I, and many people who look like me, would not have had the opportunity to fly were it not for the outstanding performance of two groups: The Women Airforce Service Pilots and The Tuskegee Airmen. Today, I am speaking about the Airmen, letting you know my personal connection to them.

I am a native Washingtonian who has long-standing Maryland roots. After leaving the District as a teenager, I have lived in Montgomery, Anne Arundel, and now Prince George's County. My maternal grandfather, Parlett Moore, was the second president of what is now Coppin State