



Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

Buford A. Johnson Chapter Newsletter

February, 2017

February Meeting

Our February meeting will take place at 10:00 AM sharp at the Altura Credit Union in Moreno Valley. We have upcoming activities planned. Please be sure to be there. We are still collecting dues for 2017. The membership period goes from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. Dues are good for the calendar year. Memberships paid in October, November, or December will be held until the following year. Memberships paid before they are due for renewal the following January. So far, we have submitted 25 memberships. Please come and join us for the 2017 year.

Red, Black, and Green Ball



The African-American Coalition will host their annual Red, Black and Green Valentine Ball Dinner and Dance on the evening of Saturday, February 11, 2017 from 6:00 PM until midnight. The cost per ticket is \$50.00. The proceeds will go toward the Moreno Valley Unified School District's Annual Black Baccalaureate Evening. This is a fun evening and is a wonderful way to celebrate Valentine's Day and contribute to a good cause. To purchase tickets, please see our President, Donald Fleming. The event will be held at Marinaj Banquet and Events located at 22445 Alessandro Blvd., Moreno Valley, CA 92553.

President Donald Fleming to Speak at Janet Goeske Center in Riverside



President Donald Fleming is scheduled to speak at the Janet Goeske Center in Riverside on February 15, 2017. He will speak on the Tuskegee Experience as a part of the 17th Annual Black History Program. Tickets are \$7.00. The center is located at 5257 Sierra Street in Riverside. This is the corner of Streeter and Sierra between Central and Arlington. If you are planning to attend, you must sign up by February 8th. The number is 951-351-8800. The program and lunch begin at 11:00 AM.

Buford Johnson Receives Lifetime Achievement Award



Trudy Coleman, CEO of J.E.T.M.A.C., Inc. presents DOTA Buford A. Johnson with a Lifetime Achievement Award

On January 16th, 2017, the 16th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Breakfast Tribute was held at the Ontario Airport Doubletree Inn. (Continued on page 2)

Lifetime Achievement Award (From page 1)

In addition to breakfast, wonderful entertainment was provided by the ICPA Dancers and The Mount Zion Baptist Church featuring Songstress/Evangelist Bidy Newborn. Also entertaining were Patrice Morris and the Loveland's Men's Chorus.



ICPA Dancers



Songstress/Evangelist Bidy Newborn backed by the Mount Zion Baptist Church Choir



Mr. Johnson poses with dignitaries.

Lonely Eagle: The Final Goodbye

By Kristi Day

Like the lonely eagle
Who glides on the winds of time,
I too shall fly alone
For you're no longer mine.

Life came along and took you
And left me alone to fly,
Now I soar above the clouds
Alone again I cry.

Once upon the eagles wings
We soared above it all,
We lofted high on pillowed clouds
Until death heard your call.

Your eagle's wings have lifted,
And changed with the shifting breeze,
They now belong to an angel
Who soars high above the trees.

If anything should happen now
I know not what I'd do
For even though you're not here
I still belong to you.

If I must learn to fly alone
I will do so all my life,
For no one else flies with me
Since I became your wife.

No one else will ever loft
High above with me,
For my pain inside is heavy
And has forever grounded me.

On January 31st members of Southern California chapters of the Tuskegee Airmen and the Archer-Ragsdale Chapter of Arizona joined with Mrs. Thurston Gaines and her children at the Riverside National Cemetery to say goodbye to DOTA Dr. Thurston Gaines who joined the Lonely Eagle Chapter on December 31st. We sometimes forget that Eagles mate for life, and for each eagle that moves on, one is left behind. Our sympathies go to Mrs. Gaines and the family. (Cont. on page 3)

Dr. Gaines (Cont. from page 3)



Flag Ceremony



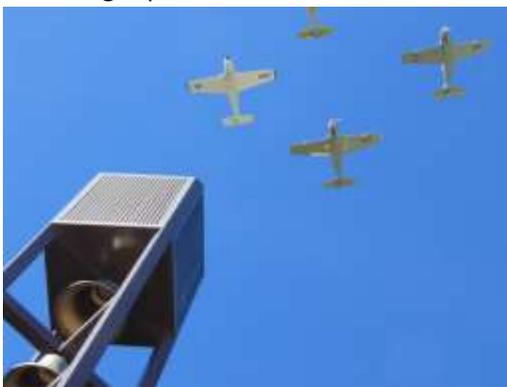
When they return, one peels off to form the missing man formation.



Flag is presented to Mrs. Gaines



Dr. Gaines daughter and son share memories of their father.



Planes pass by once.



Chapter members pay last respects.

Lonely Eagles
By Marilyn Nelson

*For Daniel "Chappie" James, General USAF and
for the 332nd Fighter Group*

Being black in America
was the Original Catch,
so no one was surprised
by 22:

The segregated airstrips,
separate camps.
They did the jobs
they'd been trained to do.

Black ground crews kept them in the air;
black flight surgeons kept them alive;
the whole Group removed their headgear
when another pilot died.

They were known by their names:
"Ace" and "Lucky,"
"Sky-hawk Johnny," "Mr. Death."
And by their positions and planes.
*Red Leader to Yellow Wing-man,
do you copy?*

If you could find a fresh egg
you bought it and hid it
in your dopp-kit or your boot
until you could eat it alone.
On the night before a mission
you gave a buddy
your hiding-places
as solemnly
as a man dictating
his will.
*There's a chocolate bar
in my Bible;
my whiskey bottle
is inside my bedroll.*

In beat-up Flying Tigers
that had seen action in Burma,
they shot down three German jets.
They were the only outfit
in the American Air Corps
to sink a destroyer
with fighter planes.
Fighter planes with names

like "By Request."
Sometimes the radios
didn't even work.

They called themselves
"Hell from Heaven."
This Spookwaffe.
My father's old friends.

It was always
maximum effort:
A whole squadron
of brother-men
raced across the tarmac
and mounted their planes.

My tent-mate was a guy named Starks.
The funny thing about me and Starks
was that my air mattress leaked
and Starks' didn't.
Every time we went up,
I gave my mattress to Starks
and put his on my cot.

One day we were strafing a train.
Strafing's bad news:
you have to fly so low and slow
you're a pretty clear target.
My other wing-man and I
exhausted our ammunition and got out.
I recognized Starks
by his red tail
and his rudder's trim-tabs.
He couldn't pull up his nose.
He dived into the train
and bought the farm.

I found his chocolate,
three eggs, and a full fifth
of his horded up whiskey.
I used his mattress
for the rest of my tour.

It still bothers me, sometimes"
I was sleeping
on his breath.

