



BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

Tuskegee Airmen Inc. Public Relations, P.O. Box 830060
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Mr. Dabney N. Montgomery



Mr. Montgomery was born in Selma, Alabama on April 18, 1923, to Dred and Lula Anderson Montgomery. He was the youngest of six children. His early childhood education began at the Alabama Lutheran Academy (grades 1 to 7). Upon completion of the Academy, he was promoted to the 9th grade at Selma University High School. After graduating from high school, he attended Selma University for one year before being drafted into the Army Air Corps (now the United States Air Force) during World War II.

Mr. Montgomery served in the 1051st Quartermaster Company of the 96th Air Service Group attached to the 332nd Fighter Group, as a ground crewman with the Tuskegee Airmen in Southern Italy, from 1943 to 1945. He was awarded a Good Conduct Medal, the WWII Victory Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, a Service Award, the Honorable Service Medal, and a Basic Driver and Mechanic Medal. He was honorably discharged in 1945.

In 1946, Mr. Montgomery enrolled into Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina and received a B.A. degree in Religious Education in May 1949. He was a Charter Member of the Sphinx Club and was one of the first to be admitted into the Gamma Mu Chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha [AØA] Fraternity. He was a lifetime member of the Alpha Gamma Lambda Chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

In the late 1950s, Mr. Montgomery was employed by the NYC Department of Social Services as a Caseworker and in June 1955, he joined Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (the oldest Black Church in the State of New York, organized in 1796), New York, New York and served as Sunday School Teacher [Junior Department]. In 1972, he was hired by the NYC Housing Authority, as a Housing Assistant where he remained in their employ until retirement in April 1989. Also in the early 1970s, Mr. Montgomery was appointed A.M.E Zion Director of Youth (serving until 1999). He authored a Resolution to the General Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church Denomination, proposing that 'The Day of Pentecost' be incorporated in the A.M.E. Zion Church Book of Discipline. It now stands as a day of celebration throughout all A.M.E. Zion Churches. He served in many leadership capacities in A.M.E. Zion Church, including: General Chairperson of Mother Zion's Bicentennial Anniversary, October 1996; charter member of the 159 West 136th Street Parsonage Building Fund of Mother Zion; Life Member, the Missionary Society (W.H. & O.M.S.); member/chaplain of Class no. 4; member, Board of Stewards; member, Board of Directors of James Varick Community Center; and, member/chaplain of the Lay Council. He was Mother Zion's Church Historian and conducted church tours. In 1999, Mother Zion was featured in a PBS [Channel 13] documentary entitled, "A Walk through Harlem," hosted by Barry Lewis and David Hartman in which Mr. Montgomery cited the history of Mother Zion Church. On Sunday, March 5, 2006, the Men's Committee bestowed upon him a double honor: (1) The Paul Robeson Award of Excellence; and (2) architectural plans for the future structure of the Church archives and museum to be named the Dabney N. Montgomery Art Gallery and Exhibition Hall.

On April 11, 2006, President George W. Bush signed a Bill into law to award *all* Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen the ‘United States Congressional Gold Medal of Honor;’ it was awarded on Thursday, March 29, 2007, under the Capitol Dome in Washington, D.C. In December 2006, Mr. Montgomery was selected by the Livingstone College National Alumni Association to receive the Prestigious Outstanding Alumni Award. It was presented on February 2, 2007 by the National Alumni Council of the United Negro College Fund in Nashville, Tennessee. On February 4, 2010, he was inducted into the UNCF “Share Your Love and Service in Celebration of Livingstone College Leaders’ Hall of Fame.” These distinguished awards recognize Alumni who made significant contributions to their alma mater, community, and UNCF.

On August 7, 2007, Mr. Montgomery was asked to serve as a contributing member of *The HistoryMakers*; a Chicago-based organization that has the largest archival collection of both well-known and unsung African American *HistoryMakers* (the organization’s purpose is to capture the stories of accomplished African Americans across all walks of life and to use video and new technologies to create an accessible digital collection to serve as a resource for students, teachers, scholars, documentary producers and the media.) *The HistoryMakers’* stories are stories of success against the odds of achievement in the face of adversity and inspiration. They are America’s missing stories. On June 24, 2014, The Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), acquired this documentation as permanent Repository of *The HistoryMakers* Collection. Also, in June 2014, The Alliance of Ethics and Art Oral History Project (a collaboration of African Americans and Jews on behalf of civil rights) was acquired by The Library of Congress as permanent Repository. Mr. Montgomery’s life story is permanently documented in both projects. Additionally, on Saturday, June 27, 2009, the Livingstone College National Alumni Association, Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island Chapter presented to Dabney N. Montgomery the Joseph Charles Price Award, “In Recognition of Outstanding Achievements That Serve as a Tribute to Our Beloved Founder.”

Mr. Montgomery was very involved in the Harlem community and served as a member of Manhattan Community Board No. 10, on two sub-committees: Parks and Recreation and the Executive Committee. As a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee, he wrote a base letter to the Parks Department of the City of New York, proposing to recognize Central Park West (between 85th and 86th Streets) as the historical site of African American settlers in the early 1820s, which was then known as Seneca Village. Mother A.M.E. Zion Church was, for a short time, located there. The settlers were evicted in 1857 under the City’s ‘eminent domain’ project. A permanent sign now stands marking the site.

Mr. Montgomery was also an activist in the course of the Civil Rights Movement and marched with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. throughout the [50+ mile] March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, March 21-25, 1965. He served as one of Dr. King’s bodyguards. He removed the heels from the shoes he wore in the March and preserved them in a wooden shadowbox, along with the necktie he wore and an address book containing Reverend King’s name and Atlanta, GA address. In August 2015, the Montgomery’s gifted the wooden shadowbox to the National Museum of African American History and Culture of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. The NMAAHC Collections Committee approved the gift in January 2016 as part of their permanent collection and exhibition of the Civil Rights Movement.

Mr. Montgomery received numerous proclamations, awards, citations for church, community, military involvements and racial justice activism aside from what aforementioned. Other examples follow:

PROCLAMATIONS:

April 18, 1998 - C. Virginia Fields, President of the Borough of Manhattan

September 6, 2006 - Scott M. Stringer, President of the Borough of Manhattan

February 13, 2008 - The City Council, City of New York

January 8, 2012 - Julissa Ferreras, Council Member, The City Council, City of New York, 21st District, Queens, New York

AWARDS, CITATIONS, COMMENDATIONS, CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL OF HONOR, and CONGRESSIONAL RECORD PROCEEDINGS and DEBATES:

April 2, 2009 - The National Action Network Social Action Award for civil rights activism

June 4, 2009 - Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney of New York entered into the Congressional Record (Proceedings and Debates of the 111th Congress) a sequence of his military and civil rights experience, declaring Documented Original Tuskegee Airman Dabney N. Montgomery an ‘**American Hero**’

June 5, 2009 - International Brotherhood of Teamsters Union, Local 237, Trailblazer Award, Annual Founders’ Day Luncheon

January 28, 2012 – Declaration of Honor - “Dabney N. Montgomery Day in Queens,” presented by Helen M. Marshall, President, Borough of Queens; ‘Tuskegee Airmen Legacy Award for Heroic and Dedicated Service’ – presented by The Learning Tree Multi-Cultural School; ‘Commendation - Office of the Comptroller of the City of New York’ - presented by John C. Liu, Comptroller

February 2012 – “The Spirit of Excellence Taking Flight” - The Eagle Academy Foundation Soaring Eagle Award -- Saving Our Sons

February 25, 2012 - City Council Member Larry Seabrook presented the City Council Citation for Extraordinary Service to Our Nation and Sacrifices in the Civil Rights Movement

April 19, 2012 - The Simon Wiesenthal Center Award for ‘Valor’

April 30, 2012 – Certificate of Appreciation for Service To Our Country – Homeless Veterans Meal Program

May 22, 2012 - Inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame

April 23, 2013 - Entered into the New York State Senate Legislative Resolution [Senate No. 1395], in special recognition of Dabney N. Montgomery’s lifetime of loyalty and distinguished service as a renowned Documented Original Tuskegee Airman

May 4, 2013 - Washington, D.C., entered into the Congressional Record Proceedings and Debates of the 113th Congress, First Session, in celebration of Dabney N. Montgomery’s 90th Birthday, as “Our Nonagenarian Hero”

January 11, 2014 – The “2014 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Living the Dream A.W.A.R.D.” in recognition of outstanding commitment to Greater Harlem and New York City, presented by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, Alpha Gamma Lambda Chapter

May 2, 2015 - Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC conferred the Doctor of Humane Letters Degree.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION:

April 21, 2018 - The co-naming and unveiling ceremony of the street on which Mr. Montgomery resided – West 136th Street [200th Block], New York, New York – approved by the City Council of New York and the Mayor of the City of New York, October 2017. The street sign – **Tuskegee Airman Dabney N. Montgomery Place**.

On Saturday, September 3, 2016, Mr. Montgomery joined the Lonely Eagles Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. and the Omega Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., at the Mary Manning Walsh Home, Calvary Hospice, New York, NY. Mr. Montgomery was married for 44 years and 11 months to Amelia A. (Neely) Montgomery. They had no children. His parents and siblings preceded him in death.

To learn more about Mr. Dabney Montgomery, other Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen, please visit the Website at the following location: www.TuskegeeAirmen.org.

