

BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

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Randolph “Randy” Edwards 1927 – 2017



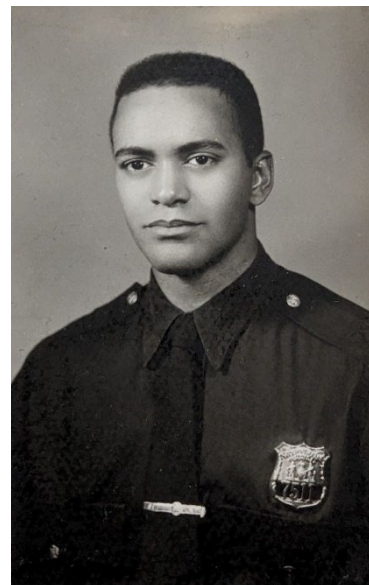
Randolph “Randy” Edwards was born on May 19, 1927, in New York City. His parents were Daphne and Emmanuel Edwards. He graduated from Rhodes Preparatory school in 1945. His whole life he wanted to join the military and become a Pilot. Randy didn’t even wait for his graduation ceremony. The day he turned 18, he enlisted and headed to Keesler Field in Biloxi, Mississippi. Shortly thereafter, he joined Tuskegee’s Class 46D for Pilot training. Before Randy completed his training, WWII ended. At this point, he was separated and placed in the USAAF Reserves.

In 1946, Randy headed to California where he attended the University of Southern California. His short Acting Career began when he accompanied a friend to an audition and surprisingly, was asked to join the cast for the Off-Broadway road play “Anna Lucasta.”

Randy returned to New York City in 1947. He attended Sampson College and Columbia University before being called back to active duty due to the Korean War. During this period, he worked security forces and honor guard at Langley AFB, VA until 1952. He then had a fleeting opportunity to restart Pilot training, but due to red tape and unclear guidance, he was unable to take advantage of it. After separating from the military the final time, Randy returned to New York City where he met the love of his life, Shirley. They met in 1953 and married in 1954, the same year Randy began his long and honored career in law enforcement.

Randy worked tirelessly for the NYPD for 27 years. He held positions in the Communications Bureau, Detective Division- Criminal Identification Unit, Narcotics, and Special Investigations. He was one of the few selected to work special events for Mayor Koch. This very high-risk position led to many unique stories to include being bodyguard for the wife of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and providing UN security for other world leaders. Randy was also one of the marshals who stood guard right below the stage protecting Martin Luther King, Jr while he gave his famous, “I Have a Dream” speech. His anti-corruption work was so well-respected that he collaborated on international investigations with police departments as far away as Hong Kong.

After retirement from the NYPD, Randy and Shirley moved to Europe. There they lived in Denmark for two years and Germany for eight years, where Randy contracted as the photographer for a German Travel Magazine. During this time, he photographed people and events across Europe and the U.S., to include the 1981 Kentucky Derby. Randy also spent many years as the official photographer for the Hubert L. “Hooks” Jones Chapter of TAI.



Randy and Shirley traveled the world making lifelong friends. Each noted Randy’s heart for listening to people and loving people with his humor and kindness. Many expressed how their lives were changed by Randy and his

zest for adventure and life. Randy was also passionate about making the world a better place. His activism included writing letters urging leaders and others to do the right thing. His name is etched on the wall of tolerance in the Alabama Southern Poverty Law Center, an honor that symbolizes Randy's lifelong commitment to fairness and justice.



Randy loved to encourage young people. Shirley fondly remembers a time when her neighbor, who learned of Randy's experience as a Documented Original Tuskegee Airman and New York City Police Officer, asked for an autographed photograph for her grandchildren who were adopted from Africa. Randy felt he could even do better, so he reached out to dear friend and fellow flyer Jim Randall. The two autographed their photos, which he gave to his neighbor. A couple of weeks later, she returned with a beautiful frame containing all of the photos Randy had given her for the grandchildren. At last check, that frame is still hung proudly in a place of prominence in the family home and the grandchildren are venturing into the world of STEM.

Randy Edwards departed this life August 22, 2017, and is survived by his wife, Shirley (pictured). He is remembered as a Renaissance Man who had many talents. The greatest being a man who listened and loved with his heart.

For more information about Documented Original Tuskegee Airman Randolph F. Edwards and other DOTAs, please visit www.TuskegeeAirmen.org.

