



BIOGRAPHY

A DOCUMENTED ORIGINAL TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN INC. PUBLIC RELATIONS,
P.O. BOX 830060, TUSKEGEE, AL 36083

Captain Samuel C. Hunter, Jr.

Tuskegee Airman, Entrepreneur, Civic Leader

1919 – 2013



SAMUEL C. HUNTER, JR.
Second Lieutenant
Pilot



Captain Samuel C. Hunter, Jr. was a trailblazer whose life reflected perseverance, leadership, and a profound commitment to civil rights and community empowerment. Born September 1, 1919 in Crockett, Texas, Hunter moved with his family to Colorado Springs, CO the following year, where they hoped to find greater opportunities for African Americans in the aftermath of slavery. His remarkable journey would span military service, business innovation, and civic activism.

Education and Early Life

Hunter attended primary school in Colorado Springs, graduating at 17 in 1936, then attended West Virginia State College, earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1940. While there, he played forward on the basketball team and became a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity, serving as editor of the Theta Psi Chapter. A pivotal influence was his fraternity brother George S. “Spanky” Roberts, who became a key figure among the Tuskegee Airmen. Though initially drawn toward aviation, Hunter deferred enrollment in the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP) to support his father’s new mortuary business in Colorado. He graduated from Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Chicago in 1941.

Military Service and the Tuskegee Experience

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hunter enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942 and entered pilot training at the Coffey School of Aeronautics in Chicago. After earning his civilian pilot’s license, he eventually enrolled in the Army Air Forces program at Tuskegee Army Air Field in 1943. He trained on the Stearman PT-17, Vultee BT-13, AT-10, and B-25 aircraft. As a cadet captain of class 44-J, Hunter was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and assigned to the 616th Bombardment Squadron, 477th Bombardment Group. Though the 477th never deployed in combat due to the war’s end, they became notable for their stand against racial segregation, especially during the Freeman Field Mutiny of 1945. Hunter, though not present at Freeman Field, affirmed he would have joined his peers in protest. This civil disobedience influenced President Truman’s eventual decision to integrate the U.S. Armed Forces. Hunter

was honorably discharged from active duty in November 1945 and later from the Air Force Reserves as a Captain in 1959.

Postwar Business and Civil Rights Advocacy

After the war, with commercial aviation opportunities for African Americans limited, Hunter returned to Colorado Springs to help run and eventually lead Hunter Mortuary. In 1959, he became the city's first Black real estate broker, opening Hunter & Company Real Estate, employing and mentoring black real estate agents until its closing in 2005. Through his business, he championed fair housing and spearheaded developments like the Payne Chapel Housing program and Prince Hall Housing to provide equitable access to multi-family residences.

Hunter's legacy includes his leadership in numerous organizations advocating for justice and inclusion. He served on the boards of the Colorado Springs Board of REALTORS, Head Start, the Golf Commission, and the Urban Renewal Authority. He was past president of both the local NAACP and Urban League and was active in literacy programs and parks and recreation initiatives.

His efforts earned him many prestigious honors, including but not limited to:

- **City of Colorado Springs**

Certificate of Appreciation as a member of the Colorado Springs Park and Recreation Board 1967-1973; Outstanding achievement and participation 1996.

- **Urban League of the Pikes Peak Region, Inc,**

- President 1976-1977; Certificate of Appreciation 1980; Long term civic and business involvement 1992.

- **NAACP**

– Certificate of Life Membership 1994; Certificate of Appreciation 1998; Living Legends Award for dedication and service as a living example of civil rights activism in the Colorado Springs, CO community 2004.

- **The Colorado College Community Diversity Award**

– acknowledgement of long years of service to the Colorado Springs community, leadership as an advocate for equality in the housing and real estate market, numerous contributions to community business, educational, civic, and fraternal activities, commitment to positive change and for “Staying on the Wall”; being ever watchful and steadfast in the Spirit 2005.

- **The Fraternal and Religious Life**

Deeply involved in fraternal organizations, Hunter joined Pikes Peak Lodge No. 5 in 1948, and was the first son to follow his father as Grand Master in Colorado's Masonic jurisdiction. After becoming a 33rd degree Scottish Rite Mason in 1969, he held several distinguished titles until his death. Hunter was posthumously honored when the Grand Inspector General Class of 2014 was named the **Samuel C. Hunter, Jr. Class of 2014**

Masonry (Blue House)

Masonic Pikes Peak Lodge #5 - Past Worshipful Master, also Past Most Worshipful Grand Master of Colorado and jurisdiction

Scottish Rite Masonry

- ❖ Pikes Peak Consistory #81, Scottish Rite Masonry (32 degree)
- ❖ United Supreme Council Northern Jurisdiction (33 degree)
- ❖ Sovereign Grand Inspector General, Northern Jurisdiction United Supreme Council (one of 50) Purple Crown
- ❖ Deputy of the Orient, Colorado Utah and Wyoming
- ❖ Commander of the Rite Colorado Springs (33 degree)

Shrine

- ❖ Kadeshia Temple #135 Past Potentate

Elks

- ❖ Pikes Peak Region Lodge #473 IBPOEofW

African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) Church

- ❖ Colorado Conference Lay Organization and 5th District Lay Organization of the AME Church – Outstanding Community Person of the Year (2001)
- ❖ Trustee Emeritus of Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church, Colorado Springs, CO

Omega Psi Phi

Hunter was a founding and charter member of the Xi Pi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Colorado Springs, CO

Legacy and Personal Life

In 1950, Sam Hunter married Minnie Ray Lane, and together they raised three children, with their family businesses deeply rooted in their lives. Hunter led by example—instilling principles of fairness, integrity, responsibility, and service in his children. He maintained long-term commitments across all aspects of his life: 63 years of marriage, over seven decades of community involvement, and lifelong dedication to faith and fraternity. This includes being a longtime member of the Hubert L. “Hooks” Jones Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., serving both Denver and Colorado Springs. He was always ready to share the history, legacy and values of the Tuskegee Airmen, especially with young people. One of his most cherished recognitions was having a great-grandson named Samuel, continuing the legacy of his name and values.

Samuel C. Hunter, Jr. passed away on December 26, 2013, having spent the Christmas holiday with beloved family and friends, leaving behind a life well lived of leadership, courage, and social justice.

