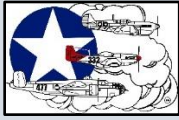


ARCHER – RAGSDALE ARIZONA CHAPTER TUSKEGEE AIRMEN, INC. NEWSLETTER



Reaching Our Youth – Ensuring the Future!

July 2024, Volume 1, Number 6

THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN ARCHER-RAGSDALE YOUTH PROGRAM SHINES BRIGHTLY IN ARIZONA!

While our nation, state, and cities continue to grapple with economic, political, and social challenges, the Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (ARAC) persevered in its youth outreach program. By July 30, 2024, eight high school students had made unprecedented achievements in academics and aviation. Each earned a \$1,500 ARAC scholarship. One is enrolled at the Air Force Academy, and two completed solo flights in a Cessna 182 aircraft. ARAC is immensely proud to present the following 2024 high achievers:



Mbuseni Tshivhase



Hannah Watkins



Kievon Hammond



Milani Bankston



Billal Abulfotuh



Iain Lanphier



Tommie Tuggle



Makayla Jenkins

This year's stellar performers were selected from a list of eighty-eight applicants from throughout the state of Arizona. They applied through the Arizona Community Foundation with whom ARAC partners to reach the broadest possible number of deserving and needy students. Ms. Diana Gregory, ARAC Coordinator for Scholarships, leads an exceptional team of professionals who review the applications and select the recipients based on scholastic merit and need. The scholarships are awarded in honor of three original Tuskegee Airmen who had ties to Arizona and include the late Col. (Ret) William Campbell, Lt. Col. (Ret) Robert Ashby, and Lt. Col. (Ret) Asa Herring. Two additional scholarships are awarded by the Diana Gregory Foundation.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:



Welcome ARAC members, family, friends, and contributors.

The Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter (ARAC) Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. held its in-place/Zoom monthly meeting on Saturday, July 13th, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. at the Legacy Conference Room. Prior to convening the meeting, a 2024 group photo was taken of the members and guests present. Additional photos of members on the Zoom call will be included later in a photo collage.

As ARAC begins FY 2024-2025, the chapter has been energized by the recruitment and addition of new members, the expansion of its Youth Program Team, a monetary increase of its scholarship program, and the promotion of its fundraising program. We are immensely proud of the addition of new board members, committee chairpersons, and regular members. We extend a hearty welcome to the following:

- **Greg Curtis**, ARAC's new Vice-President was confirmed unanimously by its membership. He brings ten years of experience as an ARAC member and over thirty years of experience as a military and federal civil servant.
- **David Grove** is our newly appointed ARAC Youth Committee Director and currently works for Maricopa County, mentoring youth and placing them in vocational occupations. David served over twenty-one years with the US military and worked as an Aviation Maintenance Instructor and Aviation

Technician. His team will consist of long-time ARAC supporter, **Dr. Erin Lanphier** and **Cort Asbury**, a new ARAC member who has experience working with youth in the Phoenix Metro Area.

- **Debbie Brown** is the new ARAC Public Relations Officer. She comes from Pittsburgh, PA with credentials as a Councilwoman, a great collaborator and communicator, and a visionary open to innovative ideas. Debbie has already represented ARAC at several notable events, including the 56th Fighter Wing Change of Command at Luke Air Force Base last month.

- **Mike Wilson** is not only a new ARAC member but also a new Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (TAI) Life Member. He has been appointed as Vice-Treasurer and will soon assume the full-time role. Mike served in the US Army, retired from the US Air Force, and currently works for a major planning firm. He is a Human Resource Manager with a strong aptitude for finance. Mike is very enthusiastic and committed to supporting the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen.

- **Dr. Moses Findley** is the new ARAC Chaplin and Care Pastor. Besides providing the appropriate spiritual presence, he is also the Chairperson of the Ways and Means Committee. In addition, Moses has been instrumental in recruiting new members and is directly involved with securing grants of over \$20,000.00 for the ARAC Youth and Scholarship Programs. Committee.

ARAC will be represented at the 2024 National Tuskegee Airmen Convention in Washington, DC by three members of the Board of Directors and one Heritage member: President Joseph A. Olano, Immediate Past President Richard Toliver, Secretary Ron Hilliard, and Heritage Chairperson, Carol Weaver. Participation this year is the first chapter representation since COVID-19.

Once again, ARAC is blessed to be able to continue the great legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen with a committed and dedicated membership.

Joseph A. Olano
ARAC President

COME JOIN US IN THIS GREAT ADVENTURE AT ARACTAI.ORG

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The following is a summary of where ARAC's finest are headed next:

Mbuseni Tshivhase – El Mirage, AZ; Shadow Ridge High School; Gateway Community College; Biochemistry

Hannah Watkins – Tempe, AZ; Marcos de Niza High School; Arizona State University; Engineering.

Kievon Hammond – Phoenix, AZ; Maricopa Institute of Technology; Northern Arizona University; Mechanical Engineering

Milani Bankston – Phoenix, AZ; Desert Vista High School; North Carolina AT&T; Chemical Engineering

Billal Abulfotuh – Chandler, AZ; Paragon Science Academy; Arizona State University; Electrical Engineering

Iain Lanphier – Scottsdale, AZ; Brophy College Preparatory; US Air Force Academy; Aeronautical Engineering

Tommie Tuggle – Phoenix, AZ; Marcos de Niza High School; Arizona State University; Aerospace Engineering-Astronautics

Makayla Jenkins – Phoenix, AZ; Senior at Dessert Garden Montessori High School; ultimately aspires to become a commercial airline pilot.

ARAC'S INAUGURAL *CMSGT ALFREDO TULLE MEMORIAL ACES II 2024 CLASS*

The inaugural *Chief Master Sergeant (CMSGT) Alfredo Tulle Memorial ACES II 2024* was launched by ARAC in honor of the late CMSGT Tulle who was a top supporter and financial contributor for our youth program. Along with Historian Ben Bruce, Chief Tulle was a key organizer for field trips to Luke AFB for over ten years.

The initial ACE II class consisted of five outstanding, highly ranked graduates from the basic OBAP/ARAC 2023 ACE Academy. The selectees were Brailyn Twynan, Tanijah Williams, Tommie Tuggle, Mason Gibbs, and Makayla Jenkins. In October 2023, each was awarded \$2,000 to attend ground school and ten hours of flight time.

Although the program had to compete with the students' demanding high school schedules, Makayla Jenkins and Tommie Tuggle managed to complete their solo flights. At the conclusion of the school semester, Makayla soloed on Thursday morning, July 11, 2024, and Tommie soloed on Saturday morning, July 27, 2024. David Harrington of Fly Time Aviation, Chandler Airport, AZ was the instructor who certified both ARACA 2024 high achievers!

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CMSGT ALFREDO TULLE INAUGURATES ACES II CLASS



(L-R) ARAC President Joseph A. Olano, Mason Gibbs, Immediate Past President Richard Toliver, Makayla Jenkins, Tommie Tuggle, Brailyn Twynan, and Tanijah Williams



Instructor David Harrington and Makayla before solo; Makayla after landing on July 11, 2024



Tommie in cockpit and after solo, July 27, 2024

ARAC 2024



Front row (L-R) President Joseph A. Olano, 6888th Major (Ret) Fannie, McClendon, Dr. Josephine Pete (guest of Diana Gregory), and Ron Hilliard. Second row (L-R) Shannon Alsobrook, Richard Toliver, Peggy Toliver, Gail Toliver, Carol Weaver, Diana Gregory, and Moses Findley. Third row (L-R) David Toliver, Patricia Arreola, April Hall Fabbri, Mark Herring, and Nate Carr, Fourth Row (L-R) Cort Asbury, David Groove, Mike Wilson, Tyler Clark, Asa Herring, Jr., and Mike Webb

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

As the chapter moves forward with an energized membership, the following potential projects or needs await volunteers with unique gifts and talents to put to beneficial use:

- An overseer/ manager is needed for inventory of memorabilia and merchandise. This person will be the chapter's coordinator with the TAI person of similar responsibility.
- A project person(s) is needed to coordinate with the Arizona Capitol Museum to include articles about the Tuskegee Airmen. Currently, the display room only features the Buffalo Soldiers and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- The initiative to name a local road or highway segment after the Tuskegee Airmen needs someone to continue the project.

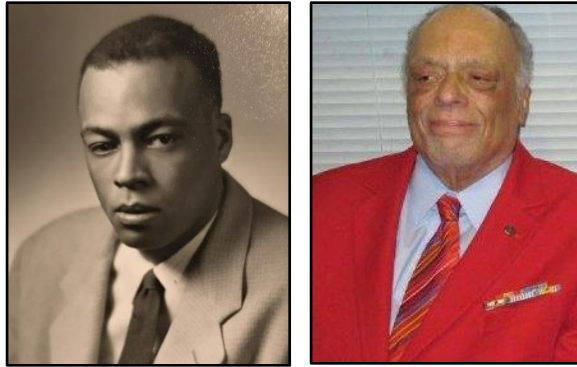
Members who desire to lead or help with the above opportunities should contact Joseph A. Olano (951) 660-9463 or Richard Toliver (623) 340-5768.

ANOTHER ARAC HIGH ACHIEVER!



Lt. Shannon Alsobrooks is an ARAC student member and officer in the USAF. She is in her fourth year at the University of Arizona Medical School. Shannon is an active participant in ARAC activities and will graduate in 2025. *“Keep up the great work, Shannon!”*

THE LAST TUSKEGEE AIRMAN IN ARIZONA HAS JOINED THE “LONELY EAGLES!”



Howard A. Williams, Jr. - June 13, 1925 – April 16, 2024

Howard Arthur Williams, Jr., slipped the surly bonds of earth on April 16, 2024, and joined his fellow Tuskegee Airmen in that sacred band called the “Lonely Eagles.” Having completed his work on earth, may he receive the everlasting words: *“Well done, my faithful and true servant. Welcome home!”*

Howard was born July 13, 1925, in Portsmouth, VA. His father, Howard Arthur Williams, Sr., was a veteran of WWI, and his mother, Corrie Nall, was a homemaker and mother of three children. Howard attended public schools through high school in Tuskegee, AL, and completed one year at Tuskegee Institute.

In January 1948, Howard followed in his father’s footsteps and enlisted in the United States Air Force. He completed basic training at Lackland AFB, TX, and was assigned to the legendary 332nd Fighter Group at Lockbourne AFB, OH, commanded by Col. B. O. Davis, Jr. His follow-on assignments included Tinker AFB, OK, and the 18th Fighter Bomber Wing in Korea where he served approximately sixteen months (1950-1951) in support of the P-51 Mustang aircraft. His next assignment was Holloman AFB in Alamogordo, NM. He was assigned to the 2754th Experimental Wing which was tasked to oversee all research and development projects at White Sands, NM.

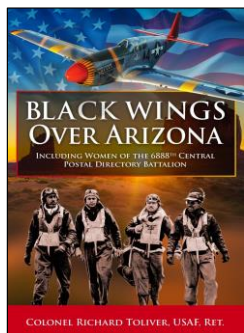
Howard was honorably discharged from the Air Force on April 16, 1952, as an Airman First Class with numerous ribbons, citations, and medals of distinction. He used his GI Bill to enroll at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University). While at Tuskegee, he met Fannie Colley from Birmingham, AL. Howard graduated in 1955 with a BS degree in Mechanical Industries, and Fannie a year later with a BA in Education. They were married on June 18, 1957.

The couple moved westward and worked in Cheyenne, WY, Page AZ, and finally settled in Flagstaff, AZ. Howard was employed by the Arizona Bureau of Reclamation, and Fannie worked as a schoolteacher. In the interim, they raised a family of two sons and a daughter.

Both Howard and Fannie participated in numerous community activities in their retirement years. In 2006, they joined the newly established Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (ARAC), and became very active in Arizona as well as in the national organization. William and Fannie culminated a glorious legacy that spanned seventy-nine years of service to God, nation, and family. May their memories live on and inspire countless generations that follow them. Fannie passed away at age eighty-nine on May 26, 2023. They are survived by daughter, Elaine Williams, son, Bruce Williams (Stacee), and grandsons Donovan, Alex, Myles, and Mason Williams.

COMING SOON

BLACK WINGS OVER ARIZONA



Dick Toliver and the ARAC book team have worked for the past three years to document the exciting history of nineteen original Tuskegee Airmen who had ties to Arizona. Following the end of WWII, the first eleven arrived at Luke AFB, AZ in 1945 and the last one died in April

2024. For over seventy-nine years, these great patriots went on to achieve success in business, education, government, church ministry, and other fields. They often joined in and led the civil rights fight to overcome the racial barriers that persisted after WWII.

The book also includes a brief history of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. These 855 heroic African American women were sent to Europe in WWII to clear a two to three- year backlog of mail for the American troops.

Black Wings Over Arizona is in the final stages of completion and is expected to be printed by late August or early September 2024. Carol Weaver, Director of ARAC's Heritage Committee, and April Hall Fabbri, Chief Editor, have been key contributors to the success of this project.

SAVE THE DATE! Thursday, September 19, 2024



On Thursday, September 19, 2024, Diana Gregory Outreach Services (DGOS) will host the 11th annual Senior Awards luncheon to recognize exceptional seniors in our community and nationwide. We are honored this year to announce that former US Ambassador, Congressman, Mayor, and Civil Rights Leader, Andrew J. Young will be presented the Dick Gregory Humanitarian Award.

The luncheon will also recognize sponsors and partners that have graciously supported DGOS programs, collaborations, and vegetable farm through the years. DGOS is proud to announce that *all* luncheon proceeds provide the critical funding necessary to purchase and distribute produce for a cherished but underserved segment of our population. These include the seniors and veterans throughout the region who live not only in food deserts but also face economic challenges. Luncheon details:

- Date: September 19, 2024
- Registration starts at 11 a.m. Luncheon and Program starts at 11:30 a.m.
- Venue: Arizona Biltmore Resort, 2400 E. Missouri Ave, Phoenix, AZ., 85016

Deadline for ads and logos is August 12, 2024. For additional information and program book advertising guidelines, please contact Diana Gregory (602)-793-6638.

2024 ARAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, AND CHAIRPERSONS

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--|
| President | Joseph A. Olano | josephaolnao@gmail.com |
| Vice President | Greg Curtis | mrgregcurtis@yahoo.com |
| Secretary | Ronald Hilliard | Rhillard.tai.@gmail.com |
| Treasurer | Nathaniel Carr | ncarr55@hotmail.com |
| Vice Treasurer | Mike Wilson | mr9322@gmail.com |
| Immediate Past President | Richard Toliver | rtoli@cox.net |
| Director of Youth Programs | David Grove | Dave_j_grove@yahoo.com |
| Public Relations Officer | Debbie Brown | Lynnbrown2010@gmail.com |
| Heritage Committee Chairperson | Carol Weaver | cewjhw@aol.com |
| Coordinator of ACF Scholarships | Diana Gregory | diana@dianagregory.org |
| Chaplain and Care Pastor | Moses Finley, II | deaconsjourney6262@aol.com |
| Webmaster | Ronald Hilliard | Rhillard.tai.@gmail.com |

**PLEASE JOIN ARAC IN MAKING ARIZONA A GREATER PLACE TO EDUCATE, INSPIRE,
AND MOTIVATE THE YOUTH ACROSS ARIZONA!**

DONATE!

To Donate Online:

**Please specify your desired contribution in the dropdown menu on the PayPal page:
*General Operating Fund; Ashby-Herring Scholarship Fund; Col. William A. Campbell Scholarship
Fund***

Please complete the ARAC Donation Form for all other donations.

Please make checks or money orders payable to ARAC/TAI and mail with form to:

**ARAC Treasurer c/o Dr. Nathaniel Carr
3520 Feather Avenue
Gilbert, AZ 85234**

***“But whatever [we] do will prosper for, [we’re] like a tree that’s planted by the rivers of water.”
Psalm 1:3***

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