

Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. **Arlington, Virginia**



Inducted in 1980, General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. graduated from West Point Military Academy in 1936, ranking 35 in a class of 216 cadets. His goal was to become a military pilot. “He attempted to gain entrance into the Army Air Corps only to be rejected on the grounds that, at that time, the Air Corps had no plans to include blacks in their service.”* Under presidential directive of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Davis became one of the first five Tuskegee Airmen pilots who trained at the Tuskegee Airfield in 1942. He went on to become Commander of the 95th Pursuit Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group and the 477th Bombardment Group. He received the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and many other awards. Davis retired from his military career in February 1970, but continued his public service with the city of Cleveland and later the U.S. Department of Transportation. *Quote taken from Governor Lawrence Douglas Wilder’s Foreword, “Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., American Autobiography”