

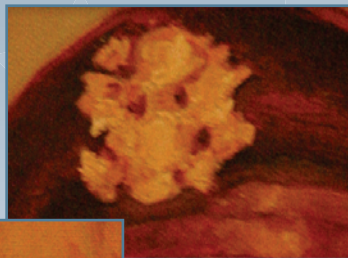
TUSKEGEE
AIRMEN



TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

PORTRAIT SERIES

Permanent collection of the Supreme Court of Ohio



The Law, the Land and the People

These works are part of the Ohio Judicial Center's collection of public art. Since it opened in 1933, the building has been home to numerous soaring and spectacular murals and neoclassical, awe-inspiring architecture.

The portraits depicted in this piece are representative of a new generation of art from renowned Ohio artists, portraying themes exploring the beauty of the law, the diversity of our land and the nobility of Ohio's most precious resource: its people.



About the Tuskegee Airmen

During World War II, black aviators were trained at an isolated training complex near Tuskegee, Ala., under the command of Col. Benjamin Davis Jr. The men fought in the war over North Africa, Sicily and Europe, completing 1,578 missions.

The Tuskegee 99th Fighter Squadron later joined the 100th, 301st and 302nd, and became designated as the 332nd Fighter Group. The Tuskegee Airmen, as they were known, received many awards when they returned home, including the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Legion of Merit and the Red Star of Yugoslavia. Lockbourne Air Force Base was home base to the Tuskegee Airmen after World War II. The 332nd Fighter Group remained at Lockbourne, now named Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, until the group's deactivation in June 1949.

Among the memorials dedicated to the Tuskegee Airmen are a monument in Memorial Park at the Air Force Museum of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, a museum in historic Fort Wayne at Detroit and a statue of an airman in the Honor Park at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Jr.



Benjamin O. Davis Jr., 2007, Oil on Canvas.

Benjamin O. Davis Jr. was born Dec. 19, 1912, in Washington, D.C. His father was a lieutenant colonel in a strictly segregated area of the Tuskegee Institute. As a child, Benjamin convinced his father to spend \$5 on an airplane ride.

At the Western Reserve University, Davis majored in mathematics, although he wanted to be an aviator. In 1931, he was accepted into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. After graduation, he was commissioned as second lieutenant and was ordered to report to the 24th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga. Early in 1941, Davis was ordered to command one of the first all African American flying units, the 99th Fighter Squadron, which was first established as the 99th Pursuit Squadron. In addition, Davis served as base commander at Lockbourne Army Air Base, Ohio.

In December 1998, President Bill Clinton awarded Davis his fourth star, elevating him to the rank of full general.

Gen. Daniel “Chappie” James Jr.

Daniel “Chappie” James Jr. was born Feb. 11, 1920, in Pensacola, Fla. After high school, James entered the Tuskegee Institute, where his exuberant personality made him popular among the other students. James participated in sports, campus musicals and dramatic productions.

James completed his primary, basic and advanced training in 1943. He received his commission as a second lieutenant and completed his pilot training at Selfridge Field, Mich.

In September 1949, James was sent to the Philippines as flight leader of the 12th Fighter Bomber Squadron, receiving the rank of major. He later was promoted to lieutenant colonel.

James became America’s first black four-star general. His final and most prominent assignment was as commander-in-chief of the North American Air Defense Command and of the U.S. Air Force Aerospace Defense Command.



Daniel “Chappie” James Jr., 2007, Oil on Canvas.

Capt. Louis R. Purnell



Louis R. Purnell, 2007, Oil on Canvas.

Louis R. Purnell was born April 5, 1921, in Wilmington, Del. His interest in aviation began at an early age, with the influence of a black pilot named Hubert Julian. After hearing a speech by Julian, Purnell knew he wanted to one day be a pilot, even though his family wanted him to become a doctor.

While Purnell was attending Lincoln University in Chester County, Pa., World War II began and Purnell joined the Civilian Pilot Training program, which was established to allow African Americans to train for war.

After a lawsuit against the Air Corps in 1941, African Americans were allowed admission to a segregated military training program, and, as a result, the 99th Pursuit Squadron, an African American cadet class, began flying in July 1941 at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Tuskegee, Ala.

The 99th Fighter Squadron is the only unit never to lose a bomber to enemy fire while flying as escorts.

Col. George S. “Spanky” Roberts

George S. “Spanky” Roberts was born Sept. 24, 1918, in Fairmount, W.Va. As a child, Roberts lived near an airport and loved watching the planes take off.

He attended West Virginia State College, a historically black college, where he studied psychology, sociology and engineering. While in college, he was nicknamed “Spanky” because he told upperclassmen he would spank them if they did not leave him alone. West Virginia State College became the first of six black colleges selected for inclusion in the Civilian Pilot Training Program, which was created to develop a ready group of pilots for war.

In 1941, Roberts became the first African American cadet accepted for pilot training in the Army Air Corps. As part of the 99th Fighter Squadron, he was appointed commander on June 1, 1942, and during the war, he commanded the 332nd Fighter Group, which consisted of four fighter squadrons. In 1948, the armed forces were integrated by President Harry Truman’s executive order, and Roberts became the first black commander of an integrated U.S. Air Force unit at Langley Air Force Base, Va. Roberts retired with the rank of colonel in February 1968 after 27 years of active duty.



George S. “Spanky” Roberts, 2007, Oil on Canvas

Lt. Col. Harry T. Stewart Jr.



Harry T. Stewart Jr. was born in New York City. During World War II, Stewart decided to enlist as an aviation cadet in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was awarded his pilot wings after completing flight training at Tuskegee Army Air Field. Stewart was commissioned to second lieutenant and sent to the 332nd Fighter Group in Italy. He flew 43 bomber escort missions in a P-51 Mustang.

After the war ended, Stewart was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He attended New York University, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Stewart retired from the Air Force Reserve with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Harry T. Stewart Jr., 2007, Oil on Canvas.

About the Tuskegee Airmen Portrait Series

The Tuskegee Airmen portraits were a gift to the Supreme Court of Ohio from the artist, Robert E. Tanner, in 2008.

The five oil paintings are part of a 10-part body of work by the Delaware County artist. Robert Tanner combined his respect for the Tuskegee Airmen, his love of aviation and his artistic talents to create the series of portraits showing the faces of men who helped change history. Tanner donated the paintings to the Supreme Court of Ohio in the hope the public would view them and remember a group of men who fought for the United States and contributed to the historic social change toward racial equality in America.



Robert E. Tanner with his paintings of the Tuskegee Airmen.

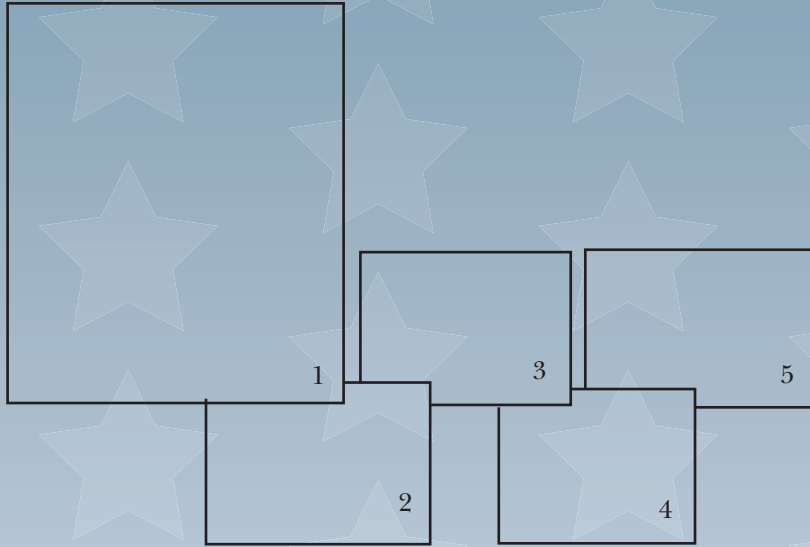
About the Artist

Robert E. Tanner enjoys painting people, landscapes and still life, finding much of his inspiration from travel. In addition to painting, Tanner designs metal sculpture and enjoys architecture.

Tanner was an illustrator for North American Aviation before working as a graphic designer for the Battelle Memorial Institute. Currently, Tanner is a member of the Ohio Plein Air Society, and his work has been exhibited in galleries throughout Ohio.

Tanner said as a young boy he had a fascination with WWII aircraft, particularly the P-51 Mustangs that were flown by the Tuskegee Airmen. His interest in the Mustang was renewed as an adult as he learned more about the Tuskegee Airmen.

Nostalgia for the Mustang and the local connection with the Tuskegee Airmen is what he “hoped to capture on canvas.” He began the series of paintings with Generals Davis and James “because of their significant role in the Tuskegee story,” he said. “After that, it was just an art choice because there were so many incredible stories of the Tuskegee men and women. I felt these five would be representative of all the airmen who played a role in the defense of our country during our war years.”



FRONT COVER IMAGE DETAILS

All works by Robert E. Tanner

From the Tuskegee Airmen Series

2007

Oil on canvas

Artist's gift to the Supreme Court of Ohio

1. *Daniel "Chappie" James Jr.*
2. *Louis R. Purnell*
3. *Harry T. Stewart Jr.*
4. *Benjamin O. Davis Jr.*
5. *George S. "Spanky" Roberts*



THE SUPREME COURT *of* OHIO

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