

BUSINESS

Texas State Veterans Home named for Tuskegee Airmen opens in Fort Worth

by Bob Francis
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Commissioner Buckingham delivers a speech at the Grand Opening of the Tuskegee Airmen Texas State Veterans Home in Fort Worth on Saturday, March 22, 2025. (Courtesy photo | Texas Land Commission)

A project long championed by the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce to honor the area's Tuskegee Airmen came to fruition March 22, as Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham hosted the grand opening of the Texas State Veterans Home in Fort Worth that bears their name.

“As we open the doors to our 10th Texas State Veterans Home, we celebrate the brave Tuskegee Airmen,” said Buckingham. “We will never forget their accomplishments and courage during World War II, which inspired a new generation of aviators.”

Named in honor of the U.S. military’s first Black flying unit, the brand-new 100,000-square-foot Tuskegee Airmen Texas State Veterans Home can serve 120 Texas veterans ages 65 and older, their spouses and Gold Star parents.

Fort Worth was home to at least five of the more than 900 Tuskegee Airmen who were the first all-Black crews of pilots and airmen in the then-segregated U.S. Armed Forces. They are remembered for flying more than 1,500 missions across North Africa and Europe in World War II and receiving numerous honors for their service.

Their story was told in the 2012 film “Red Tails,” named after the distinctive red paint on their aircraft, particularly the P-47 and, later, the P-51 Mustangs.

Eligible veterans with a 70% or higher service-connected **disability rating** from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs may live at the home for free. The home is located at **2200 Joe B. Rushing Road, near the Fort Worth VA clinic.**

“As we celebrate the official grand opening of this outstanding facility to serve veterans and their families, the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce is proud to have been a part of this project from its inception to its full development,” said Michelle Green-Ford, president and CEO of the chamber.

Andre McEwing, vice chairman of the chamber, recalled being there when then-Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush first talked about building a veterans home in North Texas.

The chamber led a campaign to have the home named for the Tuskegee Airmen, the chamber said in a news release.

Several area officials sent letters of support. Among those endorsing the name were then-Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley, then-Tarrant County Commissioner Roy Brooks and then-state Sen. Beverly Powell, D-Burleson.

“We’ve been there through the acquisition of land for the facility, the process of naming it for the Tuskegee Airmen and recommending that a replica of the P-51 fighter plane be placed outside the home,” McEwing said.

Gordon Guillory was a friend of the late Tuskegee Airman Claude R. Platt of Fort Worth. Guillory started a chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen named for Platt. An aircraft mechanic at Southwest Airlines for 27 years, Guillory went to the company to help raise money for the P-51 replica that is mounted in front of the veterans home.

“For years, Southwest Airlines has been partnering with the Tuskegee Airmen organization — sponsoring gatherings, transporting veterans to special events and even naming one of its 737s for the airmen group,” said Guillory.

“I just want to thank the Black chamber for giving us a seat at the table,” Guillory said.

Southwest Airlines, along with other organizations and individuals, donated money to the local group to commission, purchase and install the replica, said Guillory. The replica was made by Atlantic Models.

The group is also collecting memorabilia to include in a special exhibit area in the veterans home.

For their work, the Tuskegee Airmen received more than 150 Distinguished Flying Cross awards, 60 Purple Hearts and the Congressional Gold Medal. They helped pave the way for post-war U.S. military integration and inspired a new generation of aviators, said Guillory.

The city’s last surviving member of the airmen group, Robert T. McDaniel, died in 2019 at 96.

The \$25 million project will employ about 140-160 full- and part-time employees and is expected to have an annual financial impact of more than \$9 million in salaries, goods and services purchased. The real estate transaction was a land use donation between Tarrant County and the state of Texas brokered by Trojan Commercial Real Estate.

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