

SPOTLIGHT ON HISTORY

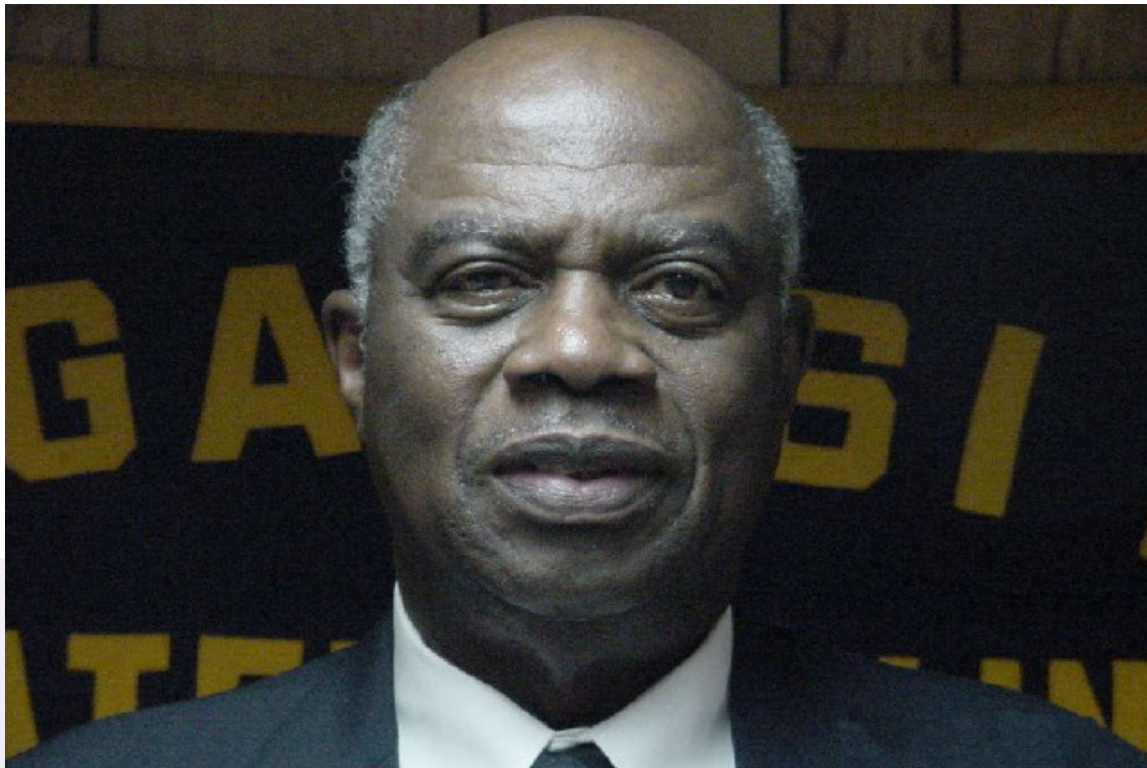
Ret. Col., Brother John Henry Smith

By Jeffrey T. Smith, 29th Eighth District Representative

(a reprint from the Omega Clarion Call, Spring 2007 edition):

Ret. Col., Brother John Henry Smith is an Omega man imbued with the desire to serve humanity and his country as an officer in the United States Air Force. Smith has done extraordinary things to help the several communities he has called home.

Brother Smith's service to Omega began in February of 1951, when he was initiated into the Fraternity through Lambda Epsilon Chapter. Smith served as president on a pledge line of 13 and received direction and guidance from Past Grand Basileus, Brother Burnel Coulon who was then member of the Lambda Epsilon Chapter.



Brother Benjamin Mays, president of Morehouse College, spoke at Smith's initiation ceremony. Brother Smith recalled fondly of the activities on Tuskegee's campus during the early 1950's and in particular the day of May 18, 1953 which served as a milestone that would form his life for next 50 years. He graduated from college that day and also became a

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second lieutenant in the United States Air Force. The day ended with the wedding ceremony to his college sweetheart, Mildred. Their union has continued more than 50 years. The couple has four grown children and three grandchildren.

He has traveled extensively as an Air Force officer. Those assignments included stints at Elgin AFB (Florida), Elmendorf AFB (Alaska), Sheppard AFB (Texas), Lackland AFB (Texas), Lockbourne AFB (Ohio), Clark AFB (Philippines) and the Republic of Vietnam.

During his stay at each station, he continued his education receiving several degrees throughout his career. Brother Smith attended night and Saturday school to complete each degree and worked around the clock in an effort to support and care for his family.

He distinguished himself many times as a passionate advocate for men and women requiring financial assistance and guidance. In addition to his demanding military assignments, Brother Smith served on credit union boards at three Air Force installations to include Elmendorf, Lockbourne, and Lackland. He served as chairman at Lackland.

Brother Smith retired in December of 1978 as director of management and budget for the Air Force Logistic Command (AFLC). He received numerous awards and honors for his military and community service contributions.

He currently lives in Denver and remains an active member of Chi Phi Chapter. He has received the Chapter's Omega Man of the Year, Superior Service, and Founders' awards. The Chapter also selected Brother Smith as its Citizen of the Year for his work on numerous projects that supported the less fortunate.

He served 12 years as board president of the Northeast Denver Housing Center, a non-profit organization that provides affordable housing to low-income families.

As an 11-year active member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Smith has served as president of the Hubert L. Hooks' Jones Chapter. Smith is a member of the Tuskegee Airmen national board of directors and scholarship foundation. The group gave Smith the Norris Parrish Award, its highest award.

Brother Smith has lived a life of service worthy of emulation by others. The four cardinal principles are evident in his military career, community service, and more than 50 years of faithfulness to his wife and family. He is just one of several Omega military men who have exemplified the words of friendship, fraternity, fidelity, and freedom.