



Publication for Employees, Veterans and volunteers of the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center

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“PROUDLY SERVING AMERICA’S VETERANS”

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Special Edition

November 2012

Veterans Day Ceremony 2012

Jackson VA to induct eight Mississippi Veterans into Wall of Honor

The G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center will induct eight Mississippi Veterans into its Wall of Honor during the Veterans Day program held on **Friday, November 9, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. in Montgomery Hall**. The Wall of Honor is a continuing tribute and recognition program to honor Mississippi’s Veterans. Veterans are selected by an independent committee consisting of employee/Veterans. The Jackson VA Wall of Honor will be on display along the main corridor wall next to the Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) Retail Store. There are two categories for induction:

Exemplary heroism or valor while serving on active duty
Exemplary service to the community post military service

“We anticipate the Wall of Honor program to be a great tribute to some heroic men and women both during and after their military service,” said Medical Center Director, Joe D. Battle. “It’s also an opportunity for us to connect with our Veterans, family members, Veteran Service Officers and all of our stakeholders.”

This year’s inductees are:

- Medal of Honor recipient, **Jack Lucas** from Hattiesburg, MS
- Civil Rights Activist and WWII Veteran, **Medgar Evers** from Decatur, MS
- Purple Heart Recipient (2) and Chosin Reservoir survivor, **James Perkins** from DeKalb, MS
- Ex-POW **James Steinwinder** from Decatur, MS
- Bronze Star recipient and 50 year Federal Service employee, **Andrew Tobias** from Jackson, MS
- Silver Star recipient and Montford Point Marine, **Arie Washington, Sr.** from Utica, MS *(will attend)*
- Civil Rights Activist and WWII Veteran, **Charles Evers** from Decatur, MS *(will attend)*
- Montford Point Marine and former President of Jackson State University, **Dr. John Peoples, Jr.** from Starkville, MS *(will attend)*

Inductees and family have been invited to attend the induction ceremony. A plaque with a framed photograph and information about their personal awards and citations will then be permanently affixed on the wall. In order to be considered for the Wall of Honor, nomination packets are due at the Medical Center no later than October 1, of each calendar year. Submissions can be sent anytime and are being sought from individual Veterans, family, friends, County Veterans Service Officers, service organizations and others. Nomination packets can be found online at http://www.jackson.va.gov/Wall_of_Honor.asp

In addition to the Wall of Honor induction, Colonel Stephanie Smith, USMC, will be the guest speaker for this year’s Veterans Day ceremony. COL Smith is currently on special assignment to the Director of the Marine Corps Staff working on anchoring the legacy of the Montford Point Marines. The Montford Point Marines were African American Marines who underwent segregated recruit training in Montford Point North Carolina from 1942-1949. Musical selections will be provided by John Eze Uzodinma. Honor Guard by Callaway High School JROTC and Prayer led by Chaplain David Allen. Colonel Joe Hargett, Commander, 168th Engineer Brigade, MS Army National Guard will lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

“To care for him who shall have borne the battle...”



Joe D. Battle, Medical Center Director

Greetings Veterans, employees, volunteers, family and friends,

Veterans Day is a very special day. It is a day when we turn to our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, those who have worn the uniform of our country, and say a humble thank you. For 237 years, they have stood watch over our Nation, our liberty, our way of life. They have never wavered. They have never failed. We have been blessed, as no other country in the history of the world has, to have such noble, honorable and dedicated men and women. And so on this day, Veterans Day, we salute you, we thank you and we respect you for your service. May we commit to that sentiment everyday. I would like to share with you the words of our 16th President delivered on the day of his Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865, one line which serves as our VA motto: *“With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.”*

Joe D. Battle

Colonel Smith was born in Goshen, N.Y. and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in May 1987. In January 1991, Col Smith reported to The Basic School. Upon completion of her legal training in Newport, RI, Col Smith reported to Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), Twenty-nine Palms, CA in October 1991. During her tour at MCAGCC, Colonel Smith served as a Trial counsel, Defense Counsel, Legal Assistance Officer, Labor Law Officer, and Senior Trial Counsel and also served as Commanding Officer, Company B, Headquarters and Service Battalion, MCAGCC during that tour.

In May 1996, Col Smith reported to Okinawa, Japan and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, (Special Operations Capable) to serve as the Staff Judge Advocate. After two years with the MEU, Colonel Smith served as the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate and Operational Law Specialist for III Marine Expeditionary Force. In August 1999, Colonel Smith reported to the Pentagon in Washington, DC and served as the Head, Law of Armed Conflict Branch, Navy Judge Advocate General’s International and Operational Law Division.

In August 2002, Colonel Smith transferred to the Army’s Judge Advocate General’s school in Charlottesville, VA. In June 2003, Colonel Smith reported to U.S. Marine Corps Forces Atlantic, now U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia where she served as the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate and the Staff Judge Advocate until she transferred to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego.

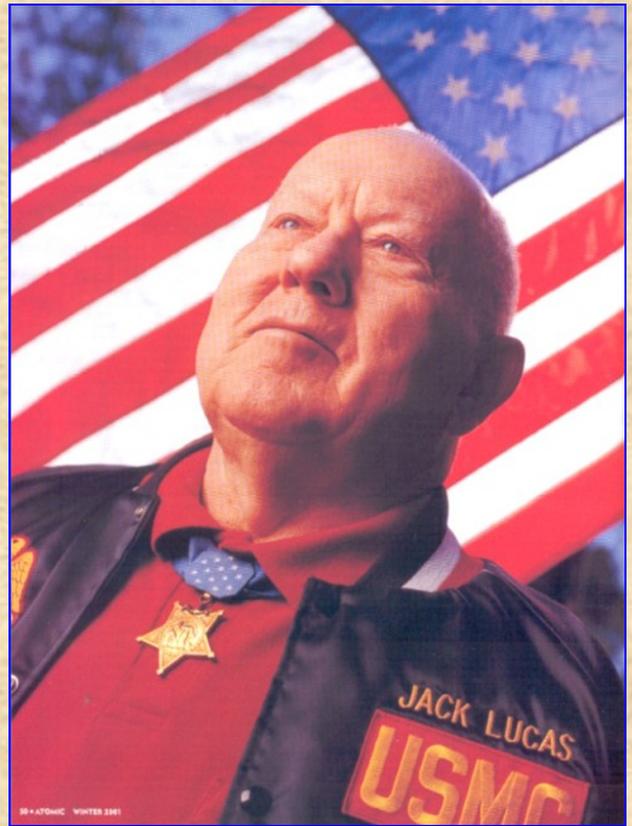
In June 2008, Colonel Smith served as the Assistant Chief of Staff, Staff Judge Advocate, Marine Corps Recruit Depot/Western Recruiting Region. She served as the Commanding Officer of Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego from June 2009 to July 2011. Colonel Smith is currently assigned as a Special Projects Officer for the Director of the Marine Corps Staff working on anchoring the legacy of the Montford Point Marines into the history and traditions of the Marine Corps. The Montford Point Marines were African American Marines who underwent segregated recruit training in Montford Point North Carolina from 1942-1949.

Colonel Smith’s personal decorations include the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (2nd Award), the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (2nd Award), and the Army Achievement Medal. Colonel Smith is a veteran of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. Colonel Smith has two children Neil and Naomi.



COL Stephanie Smith, USMC
Guest Speaker

Jacklyn H. Lucas was born on February 14, 1928 in Plymouth, North Carolina. He served with Headquarters Company, 5th Marine Division. On the second day of the Battle of Iwo Jima, he unhesitatingly hurled himself over his comrades upon a grenade and pulled another grenade under himself. One of the grenades exploded, and he absorbed the entire blasting force with his own body. He was evacuated to the hospital ship *Samaritan*, and then treated at various field hospitals prior to his arrival in San Francisco, California on 28 March 1945. He eventually underwent 21 surgeries. For the rest of his life, there remained about 200 pieces of metal, some the size of 22 caliber bullets, in his body. On 5 October 1945, Mr. Lucas and 14 other sailors and Marines (including Pappy Boyington) were presented the Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman. In attendance at the ceremony were Lucas' mother, Admiral Chester Nimitz, and Secretary of Defense James Forrestal. At 17 years old, Mr. Lucas became the youngest Marine ever to receive the United States' highest military decoration. Mr. Lucas passed away on June 5, 2008 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.



Jacklyn H. Lucas
United States Marine Corps
Medal of Honor

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the First Battalion, Twenty-sixth Marines, Fifth Marine Division, during action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands 20 February 1945. While creeping through a treacherous, twisting ravine which ran in close proximity to a fluid and uncertain front line on D-plus+1 Day, Private First Class Lucas and three other men were suddenly ambushed by a hostile patrol which savagely attacked with rifle fire and grenades. Quick to act when the lives of the small group were endangered by two grenades which landed directly in front of them, Private First Class Lucas unhesitatingly hurled himself over his comrades upon one grenade and pulled the other one under him, absorbing the whole blasting force of the explosions in his own body in order to shield his companions from the concussion and murderous flying fragments. By his inspiring action and valiant spirit of self-sacrifice, he not only protected his comrades from certain injury or possible death, but also enabled them to rout the Japanese patrol and continue the advance. His exceptionally courageous initiative and loyalty reflect the highest credit upon Private First Class Lucas and the United States Naval Service.

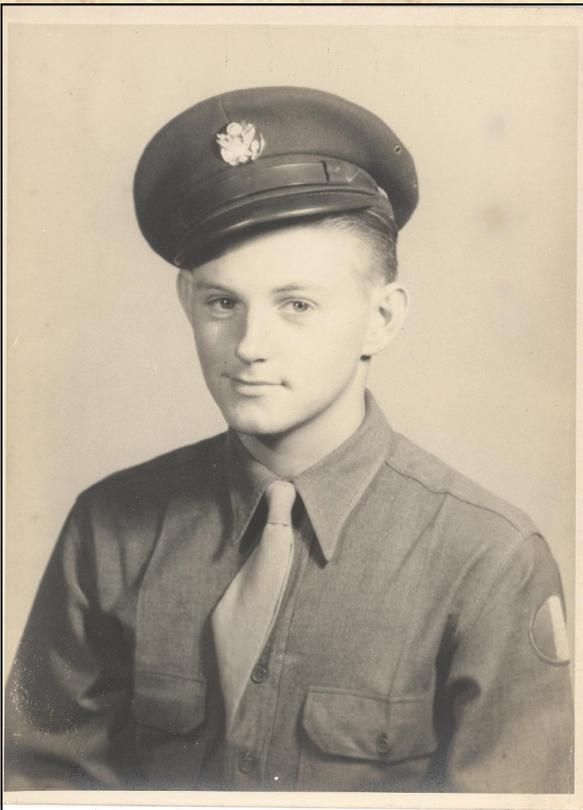


On October 5, 1945, President Harry S. Truman presented Corporal Jack Lucas with the Medal of Honor at a ceremony at the White House.

Arie Washington, Sr. was born in Utica, Mississippi on June 1, 1927. He served for 22 years and 10 months, first in the United States Marines at Montford Point, North Carolina; and then in the United States Army. Mr. Washington served in: World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He was one of the founders of the Jackson State University's ROTC program and taught JROTC in the Jackson Public Schools for 14 years. Including his family of four sons, two daughters, two grandsons, two granddaughters and his brothers, the Washington's have over **200** years of military service. Mr. Washington's 24 medals include:



- Silver Star**
- Two Bronze Stars**
- Purple Heart**
- Congressional Gold Medal**
- Meritorious Service Medal**
- Four Army Commendation Medals**
- Occupation Medal of Germany**
- American Theatre of Operations Medal**
- World War II Victory Medal**
- Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal**
- Five Army Good Conduct Medals**
- Republic of Vietnam Medal with "V" Device**
- Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm**
- Combat Infantry Badge**



James G. Steinwinder was born in Decatur, Mississippi on October 29, 1925. He enlisted in the United States Army on April 30, 1944. He served as a Rifleman with the 253rd Infantry Regiment. He was wounded in action on February 22, 1945. On March 8, 1945, his mother Bessie Steinwinder received a Western Union telegram. It read: "The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your son Private First Class James G. Steinwinder has been reported missing in action since twenty three February in Germany. If further details or other information are received you will be promptly notified." For almost three months, Mrs. Steinwinder did not know if her son was dead or alive. Then on May 27, 1945, she received another Western Union telegram. It read: "The Secretary of War desires me to inform that your son pfc Steinwinder James G returned to military control on April 28, 1945." For his actions against the enemy during World War II, James G. Steinwinder was awarded the Prisoner of War medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart and the Combat Infantryman Badge. One Christmas eve, Mr. Steinwinder penned his thoughts about his time as an infantryman in Germany.



Medgar Wiley Evers (July 2, 1925-June 21, 1963) was born in Decatur, Mississippi, the third of five children born to James and Jesse Evers. From 1943 to 1945 he fought in Europe with the army, and was honorably discharged as a sergeant. In 1948 Evers enrolled at Alcorn College (a historically black college, now Alcorn State University) majoring in business administration; he also competed on the debate, football, and track teams, sang in the choir, and was junior class president. Evers applied to the then-segregated University of Mississippi Law School in 1954 but his application was rejected. He submitted his application in concert with the NAACP as a test case. In late 1954 Evers' was named the NAACP's first field secretary for Mississippi. In this position, he helped organize boycotts and set up new local chapters of the NAACP. He was involved with James Meredith's efforts to enroll in the University of Mississippi in the early 1960s. In the early morning of June 12, 1963, just hours after President John F. Kennedy's speech on national television in support of civil rights, Evers pulled into his driveway after returning from a meeting with NAACP lawyers. Emerging from his car and carrying NAACP T-shirts that read "Jim Crow Must Go," Evers was struck in the back with a bullet fired from an Enfield 1917 rifle; it ricocheted into his home. He staggered 9 meters (30 feet) before collapsing. He died at a local hospital 50 minutes later. It took 30 years to bring his killer to justice. Evers' legacy has been kept alive in a variety of ways. On June 28, 1992, the city of Jackson, Mississippi erected a statue in honor of Evers. All of Delta Drive (part of U.S. Highway 49) in Jackson was renamed in Evers' honor. In December 2004, the Jackson City Council changed the name of the city's airport to Jackson-Evers International Airport in honor of him. In October 2009, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, a former Mississippi governor, announced that USNS *Medgar*

Evers (T-AKE-13), a *Lewis and Clark*-class dry cargo ship, would be named in the activist's honor. The ship was christened by Myrlie Evers-Williams on November 12, 2011. Alcorn State dedicated the Medgar Wiley Evers Heritage Village for student housing in 2011.

James Charles Evers was born on September 11, 1922 in Decatur, Mississippi to parents Jesse Wright and James Evers. At the age of seventeen, Evers joined the U. S. Army. He served overseas during World War II, first in Australia and then in the Philippines. When he left the army in 1946, Evers returned home to Decatur. During the 1940's, Evers began his life-long commitment to the civil rights movement. He enrolled at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Alcorn State University) where he graduated in 1950. While at Alcorn, Evers captained the school's football team and was student body president. After his short stint in teaching, Evers engaged in many different business pursuits over the next several years. He worked as a funeral parlor director, cab-driver and disc-jockey. Evers was made the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) State Voter Registration Chairman in 1954. He remained in Mississippi until 1956, when he moved to Chicago, Illinois and became a successful nightclub owner, disc jockey, and real estate agent. He lived in Chicago until his brother Medgar was assassinated in 1963. Upon his return to Mississippi, he took over his brother's position as field director of the NAACP in Mississippi. As field director, Evers organized and led many demonstrations for the rights of African Americans. In 1969, Evers was named "Man of the Year" by the NAACP. In the same year, he won election as the mayor of Fayette, Mississippi. Evers was re-elected as mayor of Fayette in 1973 after an unsuccessful bid for the governorship of Mississippi in 1972. He served as mayor until 1981, and again from 1985 to 1989. Over the years Evers has been an outspoken proponent for the rights of African Americans. He has also served as an informal advisor to Presidents John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan. Charles Evers still lives in Mississippi and is currently the Chief Executive Officer of radio station WMPR 90.1 FM in Jackson, Mississippi.





Andrew Tobias (*seated*) was born in Amite County, Mississippi on May 27, 1937. He began his military service with the United States Army Reserve on August 7, 1957 and retired on March 31, 1983. During that time he served on active duty for 21 years, 11 months and 22 days.

In 1970-71, he received the Bronze Star for Valor for actions against the enemy while stationed in Vietnam.

Throughout his military career, Mr. Tobias served at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Nurnberg, Germany, Frankfurt, Germany, Brussels, Belgium, Republic of South Korea, Vietnam, Fort Hood, Texas and Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

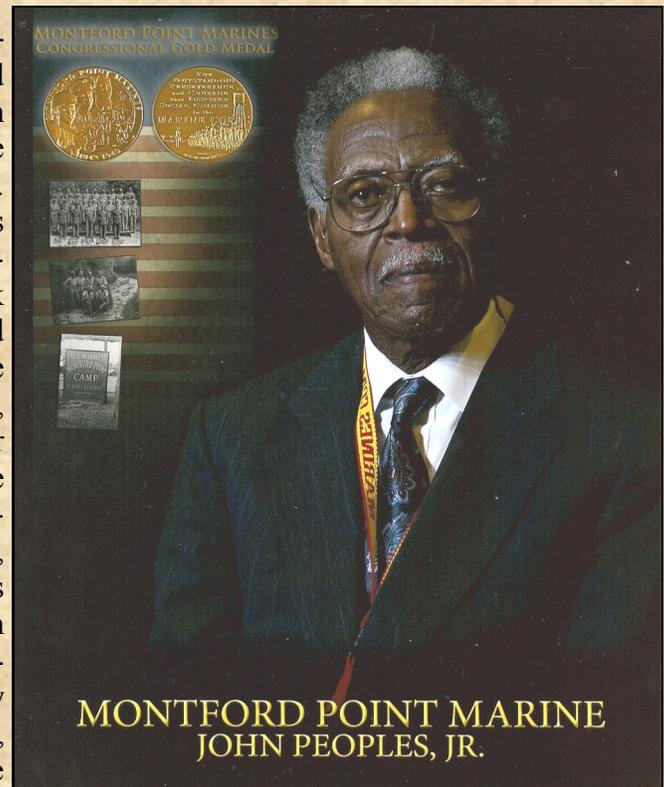
One year later, on March 4, 1984, he began his second career as a carpenter serving Veterans at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical in Jackson, Mississippi. During that time, he helped re-build, re-furbish and re-construct many projects at the medical center. Then on April 4, 2012, Andrew Tobias reached a hallmark of service: 50 years of Federal Service. A few months later, the Medical Center Director, held a special recognition ceremony for Mr. Tobias (see photo). The event was attended by over 100 of his fellow employees, friends and family while he was being taken care of by the staff in Palliative Care. During the last few days, it was obvious Mr. Tobias was in some pain, but he never let it show. It was obvious that his wife, Mrytis, was in some pain too. But she never let it show either. When friends and family found out that their friend, Andrew, was in hospice, they came by in droves. They wanted to pay their respects to their friend while there was still time. Myrtis could have asked for some peace and solitude to share with her husband and family and no one would have faulted her, but that's just not how she does things. This was about family..their extended family. When came a knock on the door, she simply replied, "C'mon." And come on they did. So in the end it came down to this. One humble man, so honest and so generous, gave so much of himself, that during his final days, so many came by to give it all back and bear witness to a life well-lived. Mr. Andrew Tobias passed away at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center on Sunday, September 23, 2012.

James N. Perkins was born in DeKalb, Mississippi on November 4, 1929. He served in the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, 1st Marine Division from 1950-1952 during the Korean War where he was wounded in action on November 27, 1950 in North Korea and again on April 24, 1951 in Central Korea. Mr. Perkins participated in the Wonsan-Hungnam-Chosin campaign from October 26, 1950-December 11, 1950. On October 25, 1950, with General Douglas MacArthur's United Nations forces closing in on a victorious end to the Korean War, Communist Chinese forces began pouring across the border. Striking the spread-out UN troops with overwhelming force, the United Nations forces were compelled to retreat all across the front. In northeastern Korea, the US X Corps, led by Major General Ned Almond, was strung out with its units unable to support each other. Those units near the Chosin Reservoir included the 1st Marine Division and elements of the 7th Infantry Division. Advancing quickly, the Ninth Army Group of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) blunted X Corps advance and swarmed around the UN troops at Chosin. General Almond ordered the commander of the 1st Marine Division, Major General Oliver P. Smith, to begin a fighting retreat back towards the coast. Commencing on November 26, Smith's men endured extreme cold and severe weather. The next day, the 5th and 7th Marines attacked from their positions near Yudam-ni, on the west bank of the reservoir, with some success against the PLA forces in the area. Over the next three days the 1st Marine Division successfully defended their positions at Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri against Chinese human wave assaults. On November 29, Smith contacted Colonel "Chesty" Puller, commanding the 1st Marine Regiment, at Koto-ri and asked him to assemble a task force to re-open the road from there to Hagaru-ri. Fighting in an area was dubbed "Hell Fire Valley, with United States forces battling overwhelming odds, they attacked continuously as they moved towards the port of Hungnam. A highlight of the campaign occurred on December 9, when a bridge was constructed over a 1,500-ft. gorge between Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni using pre-fabricated bridge sections dropped by the US Air Force. Cutting through the enemy, the last of the "Frozen Chosin" reached Hungnam on December 11. While not a victory in the classic sense, the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir is revered as a high point in the history of the US Marine Corps. Upon reaching Hungnam, the veterans of Chosin Reservoir were evacuated as part of the large amphibious operation to rescue UN troops from northeastern Korea. After discharge from the Marines, Mr. Perkins graduated from Millsaps College in 1956. He retired as Deputy Manager with 32 years of service from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



John A. Peoples, Jr. is a native of Starkville, Mississippi. After graduating from high school, he was drafted into the United States Marine Corps. He was Honor Man in his recruit training platoon and sharpshooter rifleman. He was number one in his non commissioned officers' class. He spent two and one half years in the U. S. Marine Corps attaining the rank of Sergeant. He served as a Drill Instructor at Montford Point, the recruit training camp for Black marines at Camp Lejeune North Carolina during World War II. He attended Radio Technicians class at the Tracked Vehicle Battalion, Camp Pendleton, California, where he subsequently served as a radio technician. After discharge from the Marine Corps, he entered Jackson State University in September 1947, where he earned the Bachelors Degree in Mathematics. While attending Jackson State, he was on the varsity football and track teams. He also was elected president of the Student Government Association for two consecutive years. He played a lead role in the establishment of Upsilon Epsilon at Jackson State University in 1949. After graduating number one in his class in 1950, he attended the University of Chicago, where he earned the Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy Degrees. After

serving 13 years in the public school system of Gary, Indiana as a mathematics teacher and school administrator, Dr. Peoples was employed at Jackson State University as Vice President and Professor of Mathematics in 1964. He was elected President of Jackson State in 1967. He served as President of Jackson State University from 1967 to 1984. During his 17-year tenure as President, the university experienced dramatic growth in enrollment, program, and physical plant. Student enrollment grew from 2,200 to 7,800. The academic program developed from the baccalaureate level in essentially teacher education to a five-school professional program up to the doctoral level. Accreditation grew from the general regional (SACS), to nine national departmental accreditations. The physical plant of the university increased fivefold in classroom space, administrative space and land. Dr. Peoples is a member of Beta Alpha Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and Beta Gamma Boule of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. He is a life member of The NAACP. The Mississippi Conference of the NAACP conferred on him The Medgar Evers Award in 1983. He has been elected to the Jackson State University Sports Hall of Fame, the Jackson State University Hall of Fame, the Southwestern Athletic Conference Hall of Fame. In 1993 The National Black College Hall of Fame conferred on Dr. Peoples, The National Black College Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award.



Congratulations!
Wall of Honor Inductees
Class of 2012

Proudly Serving America's Veterans

Veterans Day Program
Friday, November 9, 2012
Montgomery Hall—11:00 a.m.

Opening	Embra K. Jackson III Acting Chief Voluntary Service
Prayer	David Allen, Chaplain
Posting of Colors	Callaway High School JROTC
Pledge of Allegiance	COL Joe Hargett, Commander 168th Engineer Brigade MS Army National Guard
National Anthem	John Eze Uzodinma II Violinist Madison Central High School
Welcome	Joe D. Battle Center Director
Introduction of Speaker	Tony Bailey Voluntary Service
Speaker	COL Stephanie Smith USMC
Wall of Honor Program	James Theres Public Affairs

Wall of Honor Presentation of Inductees

Music Selection	John Eze Uzodinma Violinist Madison Central High School
Closing Remarks	Embra Jackson III Acting Chief Voluntary Service

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