

Tuskegee Airmen to be Honored

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UCR event Feb. 9 will celebrate the contributions of the WWII veterans.
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RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The UCR Libraries and SCMEB Foundation will host the university's 4th annual celebration honoring the Tuskegee Airmen on Saturday, Feb. 9, from 2 to 5 p.m. at University Extension Center, 1200 University Ave., Conference Rooms C, D and E.

The event, "Tuskegee Airmen: A Generation of Heroes," will feature a panel of six of the World War II veterans, video excerpts of last year's Congressional Gold Medal award ceremony, and a book/memorabilia signing by original Tuskegee airmen.

The event is free, but reservations are required by Feb. 3 as seating is limited. To make a reservation or to receive more information contact Carole Meyer-Rieth at 827-1244 or carole.meyer-rieth@ucr.edu.

The Tuskegee Airmen flew combat missions as bomber escorts in the European theater during World War II and had a near-perfect record of never losing a bomber to enemy fighters. A total of 994 pilots graduated from the Tuskegee airfield courses. They flew 1,578 missions and 15,533 sorties, destroyed 261 enemy aircraft and won more than 850 medals.

The Western Region Tuskegee Airmen Archive at UCR, established in 2004, aims to collect and preserve, as part of a national effort, the history of the Tuskegee Airmen, who broke the race barrier for African Americans in military aviation.

The UCR Libraries and the Archive have held this celebration annually for four years as part of Black History Month and to honor the many contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen and the women who worked at the airfield to African American history and the fabric of American life, said Ruth M. Jackson, university librarian.

The "Tuskegee Experiment," as the acceptance of African Americans into military pilot programs was called, paved the way for the advancement of minorities in aviation and aerospace, she said.