

My Personal Worth

By Wesley Dixon

Unity has always been a dominating theme in the African American community. With unity comes strength, and with strength, comes victory.

In the 3rd century B.C.E, Queen Candace of Ethiopia gathered her army and refused Alexander the Great the honor of conquering Kush. In that formidable standoff Queen Candace said these words with dignity and pride: "We are whiter and brighter in our souls than the whitest of you." Traveling in time to the 19th century, African Americans in the United States were worth only three fifths of an individual. Putting this situation in perspective, imagine a regular citizen as a penny. Then try to imagine three fifths of a penny; most people would consider it a hard task.

However, as the Tuskegee Airmen roamed the skies, fighting for their country in World War II, they did not spite America for the way they were formerly treated. Instead, they fought for their country with pride and dignity. The Tuskegee Airmen fought, for what was right, rendering little, if any prejudice. Aiding a country and a group of people, who degraded your worth, seems like the action of a fool, but the Tuskegee Airmen were no fools. Coming through when it matters, regardless of the past, was the mentality many of the airmen had. The Tuskegee Airmen can be accredited for showing and teaching me the value of character, and the importance of self pride.

The Tuskegee Airmen have not only motivated me, to achieve to my highest potential, but they also demonstrated the importance of knowing your worth, even when people demean you. As a young African American male in today's world, the society does not have high expectation for me. Stereotypically, I am only expected to live until I am twenty five, or be in jail until I am dead. However, I now understand that no one decides my future except me. Knowing that people I do not know try to predict my future, based upon the actions of my counterparts is a

quite humorous notion. For I know that I am proving them wrong day by day, living only to achieve to my highest ability.

Thus, the Tuskegee Airmen have changed my view of life completely. Having the ability to understand the importance of good character and knowing my worth, has been a priceless lesson learned. From now on I will no longer think of the Tuskegee Airmen as a group of people, who fought in World War II, but a group of mentors, who have guided me to the path of righteousness. As Dr. Benjamin E Mays would say, "It is not a disgrace to not reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for." Thanks to the Tuskegee Airmen, I will always have multiple stars to reach for.