

## Maj. Gen. Lucius Theus: He trained Tuskegee Airmen

October 20, 2007

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The résumé of retired Maj. Gen. Lucius Theus, a 36-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, was as impressive as it was long.

During a distinguished military career, he was a training officer with America's famed Tuskegee Airmen and a base commander at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam and held several top administrative posts at the Pentagon. He also became one of the first African-American officers to be appointed general officer in the Air Force.

He died Monday at Providence Hospital in Southfield. The cause of death was not disclosed. He was 85 and lived in Bloomfield Hills.

"He had all the attributes of a good leader, but behind the stern exterior was a warm and kind-hearted individual," said Ted Talbert, a local TV producer and writer who produced "An Eagle Should Fly," an award-winning documentary about the Tuskegee Airmen.

Maj. Gen. Theus began his military career shortly after his marriage to Gladys Davis in 1942. After enlisting in the Army Air Forces during World War II, he served as a private and advanced rapidly through military ranks, retiring in 1978.

He was instrumental in the establishment of the Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum at Historic Ft. Wayne in Detroit. Born in Madison County, Tenn., he earned a degree from the University of Maryland in 1956 and a master's in business administration a year later from George Washington University.