



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.

The U.S. Postal Service unveiled its new stamp Tuesday in their Black Heritage Series honoring the late Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis Sr. Special to LV Sentinel-Voice

New stamp honors first black brigadier general

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Benjamin O. Davis Sr., became the 20th American honored in the U.S. Postal Service's Black Heritage stamp series Tuesday in a ceremony held in Washington, D.C.

Davis distinguished himself in a long military career that saw him enlist as a private and rise through the ranks to become the nation's first black brigadier general and a driving force in the eventual integration of the U.S. armed forces. The stamp, dedicated at the National Guard Armory in Washington, depicts Davis at the height of his career on an inspection tour near the American front in France in 1944.

On hand at the ceremony were Davis' son, Ret. Lt. General Benjamin O. Davis Jr., daughter Elnora Davis-McLendon, retired General Colin Powell, and the nation's first black female general, Major General Marcelite J. Harris of the U.S. Air Force. Black Entertainment Television's Donnie Simpson presided over the event and introduced the special guests.

Also on hand were members of the original Tuskegee Airmen, as well as surviving family members of the Buffalo Soldiers.

"This is a great occasion," Davis said of the commemoration ceremony

honoring his father. "I thank you for all that you have done to help make this come about. And I thank you for my father for this great honor, and for me and for my sister."

On July 20, 1948, Davis attended a White House ceremony where he received the congratulations of his commander-in-chief, President Harry S. Truman. It was both an honor and his final duty as a soldier. He was retiring after 50 years of service in the U.S. Army. Just six days later, Truman issued Executive Order 9981, ending racial discrimination in the military.

If the White House retirement was General Davis' most public moment, his proudest may have come four years earlier on the runway of the Rarnitelli Airfield tucked along the Adriatic coast of Italy. On that day, Davis did the honors, pinning the Distinguished Flying Cross to his own son's chest for demonstrated gallantry in the war over Europe. General Benjamin O. Davis Jr., commander of the famed Tuskegee Airmen, would later become the U.S. armed forces' first black three-star lieutenant general.

General Benjamin O. Davis Sr.'s long career took him around the globe, including two tours in

the Philippines, service as military attache' to Monrovia, Liberia and extensive duty in the European theater during World War II. He also spent considerable time in the United States, including nearly 20 years as professor of Military Science and tactics in six separate tours of duty divided between Wilberforce University in Ohio and Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

General Davis entered military service on July 13, 1898. His career honors include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Bronze Star, The French Croix de Guerre with Palm, and the grade of Commander of the Order of the Star of Africa, Liberian Government.

The Black Heritage stamp series began in 1978 with a stamp honoring abolitionist Harriet Tubman. Honorees in the series have also included Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., A. Phillip Randolph, Mary McLeod Bethune, James Weldon Johnson, Ida B. Wells and last year, marine biologist Ernest E. Just.

"Benjamin O. Davis Sr., served his nation and his fellow human beings with uncommon devotion," said Postmaster General Marvin Runyon, prior to the ceremony. "Now he will rest with honor in the annals of United States philatelic history."

Lee Brown and Comilla Gilliam contributed to this story.

The selling of MLK

By Dr. Earl Ofari Hutchinson

This month's national holiday to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. should have been a time for renewed reflection and discussion on poverty and racism in America. Instead the talk this year again was about alleged conspiracies and plots to kill King. The talk was triggered by recent media reports that King's convicted assassin James Earl Ray is near death in a prison hospital. Ray's attorney, William Pepper, has seized on the attention to push his claim that Ray is a Lee Harvey Oswald-type patsy and that King's killing was orchestrated by the government.

Almost certainly there'll be more books, and there's even talk of a movie written and directed by, who else, Oliver Stone, on the King assassination. While the search for the truth is noble, the grab for money and publicity isn't. My suspicion is that the conspiracy theorists are less concerned with protecting the King legacy than profiting off of it. If King were alive he would be appalled.

The moral contradictions and inconsistencies between King's public image and private life style have piled up since his assassination in 1968. King has been accused of plagiarism, purveying smut, and engaging in sexual hijinks. But, whatever his flaws, King was consistent on one thing. He abhorred personal wealth and the ownership of private property. For years, the King family lived in what charitably could be described as a ramshackle house. As his family grew in size, friends and family members begged him to move to a larger house. King resisted. An exasperated, Coretta Scott King explained that he "felt that it was inconsistent with his philosophy" to own property. In 1965 King gave in and paid the grand sum of \$10,000 for a bigger home. But he continued to complain that the house was "too big" and "elegant."

He railed against the

penchant for lavish personal spending, luxury apartments and fancy homes by some staffers in his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. King increasingly incorporated anti-capitalist rhetoric in his speeches, and denounced American society as greedy and materialistic.

On several occasions he told friends and SCLC staffers that he believed in "democratic socialism" for America. King often expressed admiration for the writings of Karl Marx. By 1968, he had strayed far from the goals of civil rights and moderate political change. He called America "corrupt" and demanded "a fundamental redistribution of the wealth." He accused the United States government of waging an "imperialist war" of domination against the Vietnamese peasants.

The red-baiters and professional King haters branded him a Communist. The Lyndon Johnson White House turned hostile. Corporate and foundation supporters slowly turned off the money spigot. This left SCLC in deep financial trouble. During his last days, King spent much of his time fund raising and defending his policies against the critics within and without his organization. But he refused to back down. He launched even more frenetic attacks on what he called America's "property centered and profit centered" lust.

Today, King would be revolted by the self-indulgent grab for expensive cars, clothes, and dollars by the MTV generation. He would be horrified by the get rich quick "gangsta" lifestyle of many young blacks.

Expo

(Continued from Page 2)

Department, Wells Fargo Bank, Las Vegas Culinary Workers, KLUC, UNLV, MGM Grand, Caesar's Palace, and Smith's Food.

Information on internships, scholarships and career opportunities were readily available for expo visitors and spectators. Pens, pencils, buttons, key chains and stickers filled the exhibit table and invited guests to come, take and observe as they pleased.

Sponsoring this year's expo was the Clark County School District and the Nevada Power Company. Chanda Cook, an organizer of the expo, was a member of the Future Expo Committee, that is composed of about 20 businesses in Southern Nevada, which held expo planning and organizing meetings for almost an entire year.

"Our purpose is to help students understand where they want to go," said Cook. "We want students to recognize the skills they need so that they may make better choices in their careers."

"We want students to realize that the courses they are taking now will effect the careers they choose in the future," Woodhouse said.

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