

THE 100 BLACK MEN OF BRADLEY COUNTY

OCTOBER 12, 2006

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: 100 Black Men of Bradley County

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Members of The 100 Black Men of Bradley County recently traveled to Tuskegee Alabama with a group of young men to tour the Tuskegee Airman museum. The tour also included the George Washington Carver museum and the home of Booker T. Washington which are both located on the campus of Tuskegee University.

The tour of the Tuskegee Airman Museum started with a brief history of the Airmen and the remaining structures at Morton Field, the site where the primary training for the Tuskegee Airmen took place. The Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site was authorized as a unit of the National Park Service (NPS) by Public Law 105-355, November 6, 1998 to commemorate and interpret, in association with Tuskegee University, the heroic actions of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II.

The tour continued to the Tuskegee University campus where the group shared brunch at the campus cafeteria with other University students. Staff with the NPS met the group and gave an overview of the campus, discussed the history of the home of Booker T. Washington, and gave us a guided tour of the home. The first classes at Tuskegee started in a dilapidated church and shanty. Although the 30 students in the first class may not have known what to expect from the new school, Principal Washington knew exactly what he intended to do. Guided by the model of Hampton Institute, Principal Washington set three objectives. First, since some of his students already had some education and showed potential to be teachers, he focused his energies on teaching students to become teachers. Second, and perhaps the most famous objective was to develop craft and occupational skills to equip students for jobs in the trades and agriculture. The needs of the school provided a ready laboratory for instruction. Buildings were needed, so the students made and laid bricks. Hungry students ate the products of the school's farm, acquiring in the process knowledge of progressive agriculture methods. As a third objective, Washington hoped to make Tuskegee what he called a "civilizing agent." Education was to be total; certainly it would occur in the classroom and workshop, but also it would take place in the dining hall and dormitories. Washington insisted on high moral character and absolute cleanliness for both students and faculty.

The tour concluded at the George Washington Carver Museum. Dr. Carver always had a burning desire for education that was fed by a strong natural curiosity. At Booker T. Washington's invitation, Dr. Carver came to Tuskegee Institute as head of the new Department of Agriculture. Here, for 47 years, Carver taught, wrote, and worked in his

laboratory. His scientific ability, reinforced by his love of nature and God, his basic curiosity, and desire to help his fellow man, led him to develop numerous uses for Southern agricultural products. In 1938, the Institute honored Carver by establishing the George Washington Carver Museum on the campus. Here, Carver, who was also talented in the arts, found a home for his paintings and needlework, his vegetable specimens, and his samples of products derived from peanuts, sweet potatoes, sand, and feathers to name a few.

This was in deed a special day for these young men as well as the adults who participated in this mentoring and educational activity.