



WEST VIRGINIA STATE
UNIVERSITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

YEAGER AIRPORT HONORS WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO AVIATION

Yeager Airport will recognize West Virginia State University's (WVSU) contributions to aviation in the Kanawha Valley, and the State of West Virginia, during the 70th Anniversary Airshow. The opening ceremony on Sunday, October 1st, will feature WVSU President, Dr. Anthony L. Jenkins as well as Airport Director, Terry Sayre.

"West Virginia State University has a proven history of being at the forefront of developing new programs to meet the demands of the state and national economy," said Jenkins. "Just as that is true today, it was the case in 1939 when the University developed a Civilian Pilot Training Program. More than 30 graduates of this program went on to become the famed Tuskegee Airmen, one of the most celebrated fighter squadrons of World War II. Today, we remember this proud legacy and look forward to continuing to produce graduates who will go on to be the leaders of tomorrow."

In 1939, Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Civilian Pilot Training Act into law. The act created the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP), which utilized educational institutions to provide pilot training so that the United States would be better prepared for war. Then West Virginia State College was the first of six historically black schools to be selected to participate in the program, thanks to the efforts of then President John W. Davis and James C. Evans, administrative assistant to the president and director of mechanical industries and trade education. The Civilian Pilot Training Program consisted of 72 hours of ground school and 35 hours of flight instruction.

In 1942, the program was consolidated with the training at the Tuskegee Army Airfield in Alabama. Male African American pilots who graduated the CPTP at West Virginia State were allowed to apply for military flight training at the Tuskegee Institute.

Between 1939 and 1941, 70 trainees enrolled in the program at West Virginia State College. Approximately 30 African American graduates became Tuskegee Airmen during World War II, including Col. George “Spanky” Roberts who was inducted posthumously into the West Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame this year.

Female students also enrolled in the CPTP at West Virginia State College. Rose Agnes Rolls successfully completed the Program and was one of the first African American women to receive a private pilot’s license in the United States.

“Yeager Airport is honored to highlight the aviation milestones attributable to West Virginia State University in conjunction with our 70th Anniversary Airshow” said Airport Director, Terry Sayre, alumni of West Virginia State College.

The 70th Anniversary Airshow, a free event, will take place at Yeager Airport on Saturday, September 30, and Sunday October 1st. Gates open at 9:30 AM, and the airshow will take place 11:30 AM-4:00 PM

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE, PLEASE CONTACT:

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