

Dan Scott

From: David Cunningham <davidcunningham8233@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 24, 2017 11:29 PM
To: Barbara Halliday; Francisco Zermeno; Elisa Marquez; Al Mendall; Kelly McAdoo; Sara Lamnin; Mark Salinas; Douglas McNeeley; Morad Fakhrai; Dan Scott
Subject: Tuskegee Airmen Drive

1/24/2017

To the City of Hayward,

This letter is concerning the re-naming of the street now called, 'Tuskegee Drive.' I started to go into the reason that the name should be changed. But I would rather speak directly to people about the Tuskegee Airmen's exploits and the kind of people they were. But you can look them up and discover that information. To add, in 2007, because of their exploits, they were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their involvement in WW II.

But there is another reason to change the name. I recently viewed a documentary/drama called: "Miss Evers Boys." It reminded me of a very bad thing that our government did in Tuskegee, Alabama, prior to, during, and after WW II. "The film tells the story of the Tuskegee experiment, a U.S. Federal Government secret medical experiment on poor African Americans in the years 1932-1972, designed to study the effects of untreated syphilis." (Quoted from Wikipedia) This secret government sponsored experiment was to watch men die from the effects of syphilis, when it could have been treated with a simple penicillin shot. And this went on for 40 years! It had to be a very dark event in American History. And there is a belief that this experiment is equivalent to some of the experiments the Nazi's performed on the Jews in concentration camps during WW II.

On Sunday, January 15, 2017, the William "Bill" Campbell Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. held its monthly meeting. One of our agenda items that we discussed was the re-naming of that street. There was a discussion, motion and a vote. The vote was unanimously in favor of changing the name of the street from 'Tuskegee Drive' to Tuskegee Airmen Drive.' The paperwork has already been generated to change the name, through due process in City Hall.

The syphilis experiment did not come up in our monthly meeting. Although, I believe most of us knew about it. I had known about the syphilis experiment for many years. For me, it was such a dark moment in history that I chose not to reflect on it. If you leave the name of the street the way it is, you take the chance of someone discovering that dark time and wondering about the 'experiments' and why 'Airmen' was not added to the street name, so that it would reflect the brighter side of our history. Both syphilis and the pilot training were considered experiments. The pilot training and its effectiveness is now being recognized by the Airmen as an experience, and no longer an experiment.

Please change the name of that street to 'Tuskegee Airmen Drive.'

Thank you.

David Cunningham - President

William "Bill" Campbell Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.

Davidcunningham8233@gmail.com

(H) 408-274-8407

(C) 408-230-2214