



Smithsonian Affiliations

Lecture/book signing opportunity

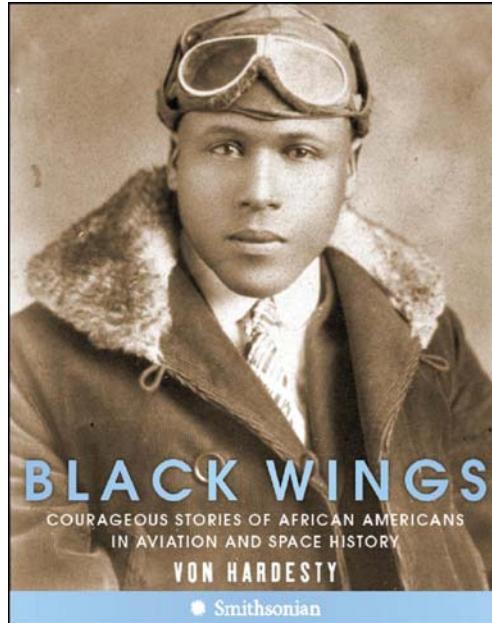


*Author Von Hardesty is a curator at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. **Black Wings** will be released by Smithsonian Books/HarperCollins in February 2008.*

Terms: The Affiliate covers the cost of the programs/venues. There is no fee for Von or for the Smithsonian. The Affiliate covers local hotel, meals, transport, and travel.

If interested, please contact your Affiliations Coordinator to indicate possible dates.

The Smithsonian Affiliate must sell books supplied to its shop by Smithsonian Books/HarperCollins. To make arrangements, contact Jeff Hobbs at 415-477-4475.



The invention of the airplane in the first decade of the twentieth century sparked a revolution in modern technology. Aviation in the popular mind became associated with adventure and heroism. For African Americans, however, this new realm of human flight remained off-limits, a consequence of racial discrimination. Many African Americans displayed a keen interest in the new air age, but found themselves routinely barred from gaining training as pilots or mechanics. Beginning in the 1920s, a small and widely scattered group of black air enthusiasts challenged this prevailing pattern of racial discrimination. With no small amount of effort—and against formidable odds—African Americans have expanded their participation in both military and civilian aviation and space flight over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, from the early pioneers and barnstormers through the Tuskegee airmen to Shuttle astronauts.

Featuring approximately 200 historic and contemporary photographs and a lively narrative, *Black Wings* offers a compelling overview of this extraordinary and inspiring saga.

Relevant to any museum dealing with 20th century American history, the story of African American aerospace pioneers mirrors many cultural and political themes in the American experience. Aerospace became just one arena for the struggle for racial justice.

Ideas for formats may include a lecture or interview, and/or the possible participation of African American aviators from the Affiliate's local community, such as Tuskegee airmen, to share their experience. Affiliations and NASM staff can help locate potential participants.