



1918-2011

*African-American/Caribbean Education Association, Inc.
(AACEAINC)*

"Working to better the education of our children"

***The William Samber, Sr.
Aviation/ Math and Science Scholarship***

Biography

William Samber, Sr. had roots emanating from Key West, Florida where he attended Frederick Douglas Elementary School. An apt pupil eager to be at the head of his class, even in these early years, he adhered to his mother's educational values to learn; and he was determined to reach his full potential. Raised in the church and cherishing his mother's Christian teachings, service to others was instilled in him. Early on, he strived for excellence and was desirous of making a difference. In 1933 the family moved to New York City where he attended James Fenimore Junior High School. Striving to be all that he could be and living up to his mother's expectations, he graduated as the Class Salutatorian. As a DeWitt Clinton High School student, he excelled in all his subjects but was a master of mathematics making perfect scores on Mathematics Regents Examinations. His dedication to the needy found him majoring in Sociology at the City College of New York, where he earned his first college baccalaureate degree in 1942. But something happened in the interim of his pursuit for higher education, along came the War. He volunteered for the United States Army Air Force and scored 100% on the Air Force Entrance exam. He was sent to Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama and became one of the "Original" Tuskegee Airmen who served in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations during World War II. To help enlisted men taking correspondence courses while in combat, he taught mathematics and other courses to them so that they could complete requirements to receive their high school diplomas. He later went on to continue his education at the State University of New York, which helped him start his education career as a teacher at George Westinghouse High School. He later went on to fulfill all requirements to become an administrator. He served as an Assistant Principal at Halsey Jr. High School and later became Principal at Roland Hayes Intermediate School 291. A brilliant scholar, Mr. Samber earned a Masters degree from Queens College in Guidance Counseling and a Masters degree in Educational Administration from Columbia University. He also earned a Professional Diploma from Fordham University and a \$5,000 scholarship to conduct a special training group in technology and open classrooms. Over the years Mr. Samber tirelessly tutored high school students who failed algebra and plane geometry; trained paraprofessionals to work effectively with math teachers; was the Institutional Representative of Boy Scout Troop 422 at the Calvary AME Zion Church; was a facilitator of Religious Education and member of the Jamaica Sunday School Association, was a co-founder of the Retired Principals Group, served as Mentor and Usher on the Male Usher Board at Greater Allen AME Cathedral where he was affectionately known as the "Sunday School Dad"; and was a recognized hero of the community leading many Veteran's Day Parades as Grand Marshall. On March 29, 2007, William Samber, Sr. was honored for his heroism and bravery as an "Original" Tuskegee Airman receiving the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor at the Nation's Capitol. He served as Education Captain to AACEAINC inculcating the importance of service and leadership. Until the time of his passing in November 2011, two weeks short of his 93rd birthday, he remained active and faithfully spoke to young people at schools, churches, civics, and CBOs advocating the pursuit of excellence and service to the community. A man of distinction and a great humanitarian, he was recognized by elected officials and featured in newspaper articles and television programs. During his lifetime, he was the recipient of various honors and awards from the community, Greater Allen AME Church, and the Aviation programs at York College and Dowling College. However, his greatest reward was in knowing that he had helped somebody along life's road to a better tomorrow.