

Advertisement

- NEWS
- POLITICS
- OPINIONS
- LOCAL
- SPORTS
- ARTS & LIVING
- CITY GUIDE
- JOB
- CARS
- REAL ESTATE
- RENTALS
- CLASSIFIEDS

SEARCH: | go | washingtonpost.com | Web: Results by Google | Search Archives

washingtonpost.com > Metro > Obituaries

[Print This Article](#)
[E-Mail This Article](#)

[Search the Archives](#) | [XML](#) [RSS Feed](#) | [Submit an Obituary](#) | [Guest Books](#)

Advertisement

West Point Graduate Clarence M. Davenport Jr.

By [Patricia Sullivan](#)
 Washington Post Staff Writer
 Thursday, August 9, 2007; Page B07

Clarence M. Davenport Jr., 89, a retired Army colonel who was the sixth black graduate of West Point and had a second career in research and academia, died of pancreatic cancer July 23 at Maplewood Park Place in Bethesda.

Col. Davenport, who served most of his military career in the artillery, did not often talk about his experiences at the academy, his family said, but he always wore his academy ring and spoke up occasionally to correct the record of African Americans at West Point.

He entered West Point in 1939 on a congressional appointment from George D. O'Brien, a white Michigan Democrat whose district was becoming increasingly populated by African Americans. Col. Davenport, a native of Roe, Ark., whose family moved to Detroit when he was a child, had put himself through three years at the University of Detroit.

[Enlarge This Photo](#)



Lt. Gen. A.S. Collins Jr., left, presents Col. Clarence M. Davenport Jr. with the Legion of Merit. Davenport was the sixth black graduate of West Point. (U.S. Army)

Another black cadet, Robert B. Tresville, enrolled at West Point the same year, but Col. Davenport and Tresville were not roommates; in fact, neither was assigned a roommate during their four years there, unlike the other cadets.

Like one of their predecessors, Air Force Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Jr., Col. Davenport and Tresville endured four years of "silencing," in which they were spoken to only for official business. No other cadets would sit by them, even during chapel services. At the end of the plebe year, when it was customary for upperclassmen to shake hands with rising cadets, no one took theirs.

"The clergy at the academy

- MOST VIEWED ARTICLES**
 Updated 2:46 p.m. ET
 Metro On the Site
- [2 Killings, Dozens of Witnesses, No Closure](#)
 - [Growth in Chinatown Exposes a Deep Rift](#)
 - [Upkeep Of Security Devices A Burden](#)
 - [Commuter Jet Lands at Dulles. Well, Most of It.](#)
 - [Va. Drivers' Fees](#)

- E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS**
- View a Sample and Sign Up
[Today's Headlines & Columnists](#)
[Breaking News Alerts](#)
[Manage Your Newsletters](#)

SPECIAL REPORT



The Archive

Read Washington Post obituaries and view multimedia tributes to Pope John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, James Brown and more.

» [VISIT THE FULL ARCHIVE](#)

SEARCH PAID DEATH NOTICES

To place a death notice call (202) 334-4122 or email deathnotices@washpost.com. Please be sure to include your name, daytime phone number, address, method of payment, name of funeral

were, however, sincere and considerate," Col. Davenport said in a 2002 letter to the editor of The Washington Post. "They would often sit beside me and talk when we were traveling by bus or train."

When a Life magazine photographer shot photos in the chapel, a white cadet told fellow cadet Davenport to leave. He protested, but an Army officer supported the white student, and he obeyed.

As a newly commissioned second lieutenant, he graduated on the accelerated wartime schedule in January 1943. When he stepped onstage to accept his diploma, he received a standing ovation from his classmates, a moment captured in the newsreels of the day and included in Frank Capra's 1944 documentary "The Negro Soldier."

Only five of the 17 African Americans who had been appointed to the military academy in the previous 68 years had graduated, and two black men who enrolled in fall 1940 left within two weeks because of the hostile atmosphere.

Years later, there was a rapprochement with his classmates, and Col. Davenport, described by a family member as a disciplined man who never held grudges, joined an unofficial association of 1943 West Point graduates. West Point, he said, reflected American society at the time, and the "monumental progress" that the school and the military had made in racial matters exemplified their strength.

Col. Davenport served in the South Pacific during World War II. His black classmate, Tresville, died in combat during the war. Col. Davenport was sent to the University of California at Berkeley by the Army, where he received a master's degree in bioradiology in 1954. He also graduated from the Army's Command and General Staff College and the National War College.

In the mid-1960s, he received the Legion of Merit for his command of the 10th Artillery Group, 32nd Army Air Defense Command in Europe. He retired from the Army in 1972 as a full colonel.

After Col. Davenport left the military, he completed all but his dissertation for a doctorate in educational administration at George Washington University. He also worked as a senior systems analyst at the Stanford Research Institute and worked at Federal City College, now part of the University of the District of Columbia. He retired in 2000 as Howard University's administrative coordinator in its Materials Science Research Center of Excellence.

Col. Davenport was a music lover and had subscriptions to Kennedy Center series. He was also an award-winning amateur photographer and a member of All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington.

Survivors include his wife of 64 years, Yolande B. Davenport of Bethesda; three children, Elizabeth McKune of McLean, Stephen Davenport of Edmond, Okla., and Richard Davenport of Putnam Valley, N.Y.; and four grandchildren.

FEATURED ADVERTISER LINKS

[Refinance Rates As Low As 2.9% - FREE QUOTES!](#)

[\\$300,000 Mortgage for \\$965/mo! Refinance & Save \\$1,000's!](#)

[Invest with Fidelity Total Retirement Advantage](#)

[Be Prepared. Fight Identity Theft! Equifax.com.](#)

[\\$425,000 Loan for only \\$1,417/mo. NO SSN REQUIRED!](#)

[Asbestos, Celebrex, Mesothelioma, Lung Cancer, AMO](#)

[T-Shirts, Custom Hats, Custom Koozies, Wedding Favors](#)

[Cool Gadgets, Great Deals, Visit CircuitCity.com](#)

[T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless, Cingular/AT&T Phones](#)

[Print This Article to Republish](#) [E-Mail This Article](#) [Permission](#)

More on washingtonpost.com

[The Color of Health Care: Diagnosing Bias in Doctors](#)

[US Slipping in Life Expectancy Rankings](#)

[Richmond Flowers; Ala. Attorney General Opposed Segregation](#)

[» Related Topics & Web Content](#)

[powered by Inform](#)

People who read this also read ...

[Marvin Kay; Officer And Weapons Expert](#)

[Novelist John Gardner; Reimagined Fleming's James Bond](#)

[Dolores King; Dog Trainer's Specialty Was Terrier Breed](#)

[Albert Dawson; Officer In Air Force Intelligence](#)

Ads by Google

Bankruptcy.

Stop Robbing Peter to Pay Paul! Macomb County - Free Consultations
www.financiallawgroup.com

Single Mom Makes It Big

Nearly Lost Home To Earning More In A Week Than Most Make In A Year.
CoachYouToSuccess.com

Make a Living Will

Make a State specific Living Will without the lawyer fees.
LawDepot.com

SEARCH:  washingtonpost.com Web: Results by 

[NEWS](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [LOCAL](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [ARTS & LIVING](#) | [CITY GUIDE](#)

[JOBS](#) | [CARS](#) | [REAL ESTATE](#) | [RENTALS](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#)

[washingtonpost.com: Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Make Us Your Home Page](#) | [mywashingtonpost.com](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS](#) | [Archives](#)
[The Washington Post: Subscribe](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Electronic Edition](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [The Washington Post Store](#) | [About The Post](#) | [National Weekly](#)
[The Washington Post Company: Information and Other Post Co. Websites](#)

© Copyright 1996-2007 The Washington Post Company | [User Agreement and Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights and Permissions](#)