



SYLVESTER TURNER
MAYOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF HOUSTON
TEXAS

August 28, 2020

Rueben A. Shelton III, Esq.
Grand Polemarch
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
2322-24 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19132-4590

Dear Mr. Shelton,

As Mayor of Houston, I have worked alongside revered leaders ranging from community organizers to international dignitaries; however, the personal, communal and philanthropic contributions offered to the City of Houston and its diverse communities by Captain Paul J. Matthews are unparalleled. I am pleased to recommend Captain Paul J. Matthews to receive Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated's most coveted honor, the Laurel Wreath Award.

While a pharmaceutical executive in 1975, Captain Matthews worked diligently with medical professionals to bridge consumers and deliverers of healthcare. In doing so, he helped launch a community-based hypertension control program sponsored by the Regional Medical Program of Texas. As a result, he was named an advisory planning commissioner.

I am most impressed by his model of selfless service and civic engagement in the Greater Houston community. For nearly five decades, Captain Matthews' humanitarian spirit has been displayed through his extensive involvement in the Houston Arts Alliance, Convict Leasing and Labor Project and as a voting precinct officer. Most notably, Captain Matthews organized and led the historic preservation and renovation efforts of the Houston Light Guard Armory, founded in 1925, which now houses the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum. Because of his visionary leadership, the facility has since become one of Houston's most prominent and visited attractions in the Museum District aimed at "Educating, preserving, promoting and perpetuating the history, traditions and contributions of the Buffalo Soldier towards the development and defense of America."

It is my hope that you will strongly consider one of Houston's pioneers and revered community leaders, Captain Paul J. Matthews as a recipient of the Laurel Wreath Award. His positive influence on the lives of Houstonians through entrepreneurial ventures, community engagement and mentorship are landmarks of servant leadership and achievement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner".

Sylvester Turner
Mayor

CAPTAIN P.J. MATTHEWS

FROM VISION TO REALITY



POSITIVE BLACK MALE ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON

Empowering youth, building strong minds, bodies & spirits
Strengthening the classroom in this city, state & nation
Impacting achievement & promoting success in youth ages 6-18

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September 1, 2020

Dear Mr. Shelton,

I am Dr. J.A. Rob Jr. founder and CEO of Positive Black Male Association. It is indeed an honor to share my thoughts on the extraordinary leadership and service of Captain Paul J. Matthews.

I have known and worked with Captain Matthews for more than 20 years. He has supported our organization financially and consistently demonstrated the seven Pillars of Character we teach to our youth: A Positive Attitude, Perseverance, Fairness, Respect, Responsibility, Good Citizenship, and Integrity.

In 2019, Captain Matthews was the recipient of our highest award, The Billy J. Baines Legendary Eagle Award. It was given for his many years of dedication and diligence to the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum (BSNM) and Positive Black Males Association (PBMA).

He has partnered with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to sponsor an annual summer camp. PBMA's boys and girls have participated in outdoor recreation (fishing, angler education class and nature hike), cultural resource exploration (Fort Davis/Fort McKavett historical trip), horse riding programs (basic equestrian training), camping (hiking, and fishing), natural resource career development (completion of academic program) and service projects (environmental specific).

In addition to his educational programs with the PBMA boys and girls, Captain Matthews is recognized for his leadership in other fields of human endeavor.

1. Captain Matthews was the Chairman for the Buffalo Soldiers Sesquicentennial Reunion in Houston. And, responsible for the planning, organization, and implementation of this momentous event. PBMA students had an opportunity to meet 92-year old Henri Legandre, a World War II veteran from North Carolina. He told us he fought two wars, one against the axis in Europe and the other against segregation in America. On that Saturday, we witness a parade of about 150 horses and wagons moving through 3rd Ward and the Museum District.

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CAPTAIN P.J. MATTHEWS

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2. The creation and dedication on November 10, 2018 of the World War I Centennial Memorial to African American soldiers at the BSNM. This memorial was part of a "100 Cities/100 Memorials" project honoring the names of those who served and the history of the communities where they lived.

3. The establishment of the Paul J. Matthews Lecture Series at Prairie View A&M University to celebrate the numerous contributions made to this country by African American military personnel. In addition to honoring African American military service, the lecture series serve as a gateway for today's students to engage more into African American history. The program was initially funded by a \$50,000 endowment from Captain Matthews.

4. Captain Matthews worked with the Smithsonian Institute, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamations and a host of anthropologists, museum curators, historians, and engineers from University of Houston to re-create the first known facial re-construction of a Buffalo Soldier. The face of Trooper Thomas Smith, a 20-year old African American who died of typhoid in 1866 is a one-of-a-kind exhibit only available for viewing at the BSNM.

His achievements have been recognized by all segments of Houston's diverse community (areas of Education, Military, Business, Sports, Clergy, Medicine, Arts, Science, and Law). The Buffalo Soldiers presented the Colors at the Houston Astros World Series and Captain Matthews was honored on national TV during the 7th ending stretch.

Based on the exceptional documented leadership principles demonstrated above and the lasting contributions created by Captain Matthews' accomplishments, I enthusiastically support his nomination for the Laurel Wreath Award.

Sincerely,

Dr. J. A. Rob Jr.

Dr. J. A. Rob, Jr. DSWS
PBMAH/CEO

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CAPTAIN P.J. MATTHEWS



The Center for African American Military History
dba Buffalo Soldiers National Museum

3816 Caroline Street • Houston, TX 77004

August 23, 2020

Paul (PJ) Matthews
Founder

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Chief Executive Officer

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Dear Mr. Shelton,

My name is Angela Holder. I am a professor of History at Houston Community College. I have enjoyed working with Captain Paul (PJ) Matthews in bringing his vision of honoring Black men and women military personnel to life for almost twenty years.

Captain Matthews has dedicated his time, money, and energy to supporting organizations benefitting the underserved and is particularly moved by educating children and youth. He has worked with 100 Black Men of Houston, Junior Buffalo Soldiers, Positive Black Males Association, and others by assisting in educating and mentoring disadvantaged black boys in the city of Houston. He has partnered with Houston Chapter of the Buffalo Soldiers to sponsor military history workshops at the BSNM and campouts at Fort Davis. More than 2,500 boys and girls have participated in this unique inner-city project.

Captain Matthews is a charter member and first president of the National Association of Black Veterans Houston Chapter. The Houston Chapter has assisted hundreds of veterans in gaining access to programs and agencies to help with housing, medical, money matters, and psychological issues affecting their life after serving.

Captain Matthews obtained grants from charitable foundations to established internship programs with Texas Southern University, Rice University, and Houston Community College. Students are exposed to all areas of the museums from docent, curatorial, research, fundraising and exhibits. Students have an opportunity to learn and earn.

MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY:

I am an American History Professor at Houston Community College, but I learned of the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum while teaching at Prairie View A&M University in January 2001. The Houston Chronicle had a front page writeup about a new museum opening in Houston with a focus on Black military history. It also noted the founder as being a graduate of PVAMU. I told my students to go and introduce themselves as PVAMU students to the museum founder. They were to write an essay on their visit and what they learned about Blacks and the military. This was important because these students had Dads who served in Operation Desert Storm and Vietnam, while their Grandfathers served in the Korean War. The Buffalo Soldiers National Museum (BSNM) is a teaching facility, as well as, a repository for historical artifacts. My students enjoyed their time at the BSNM and reported they learned quite a bit about Black military history from their visit.

FROM VISION TO REALITY

I have family ties to an unfortunate incident in which thirteen Black soldiers were hanged without appeal because of a riot in Houston, Texas in 1917. I wanted to talk with him about it and I am glad I did.

I introduced myself and PJ was happy to meet the "Prairie View Professor who was sending students to the museum." I told him of my family's ties to the Camp Logan Mutiny/Houston Riot of 1917 and he requested I do an exhibit on it. PJ's passion for American history is "infectious" and I agreed to do it. The 84th anniversary of the event was approaching that August, but he suggested we do an observance the following year in 2002. PJ was familiar with the event and supported plans to have renown U.S. historian Robert V. Haynes, local historian Patricia Prather, and another Buffalo Soldier descendant, Attorney Jason Holt of New Jersey, to attend the observance. It was the beginning of an annual observance resulting in:

1. Award-winning documentary, "Mutiny on the Bayou" (KHOU-TV 2005),
2. Congressional recognition from U.S. Representative Al Green on the 90th Anniversary of the event (2007),
3. Historical documents and artifacts related to the riot coming to the museum (2001-2017),
4. National attention pursuant to a pardon for the wrongfully executed soldiers and presenting this request before the Veterans Brain Trust at the Congressional Black Caucus (2007-present),
5. Working with the Regional Office of the Veterans Administration for the acquisition and the placement of headstones on the graves of three soldiers buried 100 years ago in obscurity as a result of the Houston Riot of 1917.

There were four soldiers who died because of the riot: two the night of the riot and two other soldiers days later from improper treatment of their wounds the night of the riot. Only one soldier had a marker on his grave in San Antonio, Texas while the other three in Houston did not.

The placement of three markers was the most touching of all the work PJ has done on the Camp Logan Mutiny/Houston Riot of 1917 Project. The Houston Press newspaper headline of August 27, 1917 read, "Unwept, Unhonored, and Unsung Two Negro Soldiers Are Buried." PJ made this headline into a lie on August 23, 2017 when he arranged for a dignified military burial service for those same two soldiers 100 years later! They were no longer buried in obscurity but recognized as the proud soldiers they were before coming to Jim Crow rule Texas. A third soldier was given a marker at his burial site in an historic Catholic cemetery and put in place under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese. To see the Marine Reservists, give that beautiful slow-motion salute while holding the tombstone covers brought tears to my eyes and the eyes of the attendees. At his retirement gathering, James Hedge of the VA said, "working with getting the soldiers headstones was the "high mark" of his career."

It is this type of selfless work, dedication and leadership that makes Captain Matthews a worthy candidate for this prestigious award. He has made a difference in the lives of patrons and supporters locally, statewide, national and around the world. If you require additional information or clarification, please call.

Sincerely,



Professor Angela L. Holder-Houston Community College
Louisiana State University Class of 1982 (Social Sciences)
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc-Iota Theta Chapter
Past President and Member of the Board of Directors, BSNM
Curator, Camp Logan Mutiny/ Houston Riot of 1917 Exhibit BSNM

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CAPTAIN P.J. MATTHEWS