

## FROM VISION TO REALITY

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.  
Houston (TX) Alumni Chapter

### Laurel Wreath Award Petition: Summary Statement

## CAPTAIN PAUL J. MATTHEWS: *A True Achiever*

Brother Paul J. Matthews has done what no man has ever done before. In 2001, he founded the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum (BSNM) in Houston, Texas, the first museum of its kind in the world with the largest private collection of African American military memorabilia in the world.

With Matthews leading the way, BSNM is preserving the legacy of brave Buffalo Soldiers, chronicling the African American military experience, and fostering understanding and appreciation of Black history and culture.

More than 500,000 local, national and international visitors have walked through the doors of the museum since its establishment, making it one of the top five tourist attractions in America's fourth largest city.

Matthews has also received widespread recognition for his community involvement and leadership. Whether working with inner-city youth, lecturing during Black History Month or collaborating with corporations to make a difference, Matthews is a true achiever.

"I am most impressed by his model of selfless service and civic engagement in the Greater Houston community," said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner.

As a U.S. Army veteran, historian, author and former pharmaceutical company executive, Matthews is well-suited for his role with BSNM.

He first became interested in the Buffalo Soldiers as an ROTC cadet at Prairie View A&M University. Matthews was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army and served as an executive officer in a MASH unit in Vietnam. He was promoted to captain upon his return to the United States.

As a civilian, Matthews became a trailblazer at Merck, one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world. He was the first African American pharmaceutical representative in the Southwest and was later promoted to director of Military Sales. He traveled to nearly every military post in the United States.

Matthews dreamed of preserving military history and sharing it with others. When his collection of memorabilia outgrew his garage, he moved it to a building in Houston's Third Ward. As more space became necessary, Matthews set his sights on the historic Houston Light Guard Armory. He raised more than \$6 million during an economic downturn to purchase the facility and turned the abandoned building into an international treasure.

Though Matthews is the man behind the museum, he stresses that he has not done it alone. He has received support from family members and friends, veterans and community groups, corporate sponsors and Greek organizations, including his brothers of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

The museum's numerous exhibits cover seven wars, along with women in the military, chaplains in the military and astronauts. Exhibits range from the first-ever three-dimensional reconstruction of a Buffalo Soldier to a historic 10th Cavalry flag taken into orbit in 2006 aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery.

Major Charles Williams, president of the Greater Houston Chapter, 9th and 10th Horse Cavalry Association, said: "The BSNM has become the center of the Buffalo Soldier intellectual universe through one-of-a-kind exhibits, lectures from military experts, and serving as national association headquarters and a valuable source of information on the African American military experience." Captain Paul J. Matthews has become a man of achievement on the local, state, national and international levels.

CAPTAIN P.J. MATTHEWS

A spirit of *Achievement* through SALIENT  
SOLID &  
SELFLESS  
*Leadership*



CAPTAIN PAUL J. MATTHEWS

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