

OBITUARIES

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH *Published: Tuesday, May 9, 2006*

BLOUNT M.D., FACS, FICS Dr. Wilbur Blount lived fully his 77 years until passing May 8, 2006 in Columbus, Ohio. The son of the late Dr. Percival H. and Bayetta Dent Blount of Lewisburg, North Carolina and brother of Percy Shaw Blount, he was born on February 5, 1929 in Columbus, Ohio. He graduated from East High School in Columbus, received his bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University in 1951, and earned his medical degree from The Ohio State University College of Medicine in 1959. Beginning with his enrollment the ROTC program at The Ohio State University, Dr. Blount had a distinguished military career as a medical physician. In 1984 he was promoted to, Full-Colonel Blount and served as the State Air Surgeon of the Ohio Air National Guard until 1991. Dr. Blount is a nationally recognized ophthalmologist for his work advancing retinal surgical techniques and gave across at medical schools and teaching hospitals throughout the United States. He was a Tuskegee Airman, having served in the Air Force during the Korean era, and a reserve of the Ohio National Guard. He was active in numerous organizations, including the Young Astronauts Program, the board of nominations for the National Aviation Hall of Fame and the boards of the Motts Military Museum, and the James D. Weaver Society. He was also a member of the Ohio Chapter of the Tuskegee Airman, Inc., the National Medical Association, the Ohio Diabetes Association, and the Columbus Chapter of Boule'. In private practice in Columbus, Ohio from 1977 to 2004, Dr. Blount served as a physician-consulting for the Erdey Eye Group of Columbus, Ohio from 2004 until his passing. He was also a volunteer for the Physicians Free Clinic, a fellow of the Aerospace Medical Association, and inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. Dr. Blount is survived by his wife of 30 years, Elsie; daughters, Angela (William D., II) Vincent of Lakeridge, Virginia, Elizabeth and Jacqueline of Bexley, Ohio; sons, Michael (Victoria) Paradis of Maplewood, New Jersey and Wilbur S. of Shaker Heights, Ohio; grandchildren, Christopher Jeffrey and Jamie May Paradis, and Amanda Elisha Vincent. Funeral service 1 p.m. Wednesday, May 10, 2006 at the Broad Street Presbyterian Church, 760 E. Broad St. The family will receive friends Wednesday at the church, 11 a.m. until the start of funeral service. Entombment to follow in Green Lawn Cemetery. **In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Wilbur C. Blount, M.D. Memorial Fund, Number 312179, and sent to The Ohio State University, 1480 West Lane Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43221.** Arrangements entrusted to DIEHL-WHITTAKER FUNERAL SERVICE, 720 E. Long St.

DR. WILBUR BLOUNT

RETIRED COLONEL, 77, RECALLED FOR GENEROSITY

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By Matt Tullis

Even in the last month of his life, Dr. Wilbur Blount, a retired colonel in the Ohio Air National Guard and a respected Columbus ophthalmologist, was still helping others.

He was still sponsoring students, so they could attend military balls. He was still helping students at his alma mater, East High School. And he was still putting together presentations on health care for senior citizens, said retired Air Force Maj. Ben Klepek, the senior aerospace instructor and ROTC teacher at East.

Blount, who was the second state air surgeon of the Ohio Air National Guard and a 2004 inductee into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame, died Monday. He was 77. He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Elsie, and five children.

"He has touched so many lives, young lives," Klepek said. "It didn't matter if you were white, black or Hispanic, he just wanted to help young people reach their goals."

Retired Ohio National Guard Chief Master Sgt. Terry McCumber said Blount was a great educator in the Air Force, especially when it came to teaching medics. He said Blount's death was a "great loss."

The two met in 1971 at what was then Lockbourne Air Force Base, and struck up a friendship that lasted until Blount's death.

"He was very well thought of in the military," he said. "I can't think of anybody he hasn't touched."

Klepek said Blount used his extensive professional contacts to help students at East, where he helped start the school's ROTC program. He also volunteered by teaching classes, lining up speakers and sponsoring students, so they could go to things such as summer leadership school or military balls.

One of those students was Daniel Petry, now a staff sergeant in the National Guard's 121st Air Refueling Wing at Lockbourne's successor, Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base.

"If we needed help with something, he knew somebody that could help us out," Petry said.

Blount received a bachelor's degree from Ohio State University in 1951. Eight years later, he earned his medical degree at OSU. While at OSU, he was inspired by the heroics of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II and enrolled in ROTC.

He was later commissioned as an officer in the Air Force. He served two four-year tours of duty during the 1950s and was promoted to colonel in the Ohio Air National Guard in 1976. He served as state air surgeon until 1991.

The funeral will be at 1 p.m. today at the Broad Street Presbyterian Church, 760 E. Broad St. Burial will be at Green Lawn Cemetery.

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