

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

EDWARD JOSEPH (ED) DWIGHT JR

pilot, sculptor, soldier, celebrity

"I went to White schools and I didn't know anything about Black history."

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COURTESY OF U.S. AIRFORCE

Background Information

Born on September 9, 1933, in Kansas City, Kansas, Ed Dwight was incredibly motivated and invested in education early on. He received a scholarship to attend college earned an associate degree in the Arts of Engineering in 1953. In 1957 Ed took night classes to complete a bachelor's degree with cum laude distinctions from Arizona State University in aeronautical engineering. In 1977 Dwight also received a Master of Fine Arts in sculpting from the University of Denver.

Dwight's Resistance

Ed Dwight enlisted in the Air Force in 1953 and quickly excelled through the ranks as one of the most known, best Black pilots in the Air Force. Dwight was asked by the Kennedy Administration in 1961 to join a trainee applicant pool and become the first Black astronaut. Dwight left his promising career and joined but was discriminated against throughout the program.¹ Dwight was eventually cut from the program, and he resigned from the Air Force in 1966.

Dwight was an engineer, real estate agent, and in his free time infused his love for creation with his newfound knowledge of Black history, which he lacked growing up in White schools. Dwight started his sculpting career after being asked to create a sculptor by the first Black lieutenant governor of Colorado in 1974.² Dwight now sculpts full time, specializing in celebrating Black culture, recognizing history and honoring prominent Black figures. He has pioneered sculpting techniques, owns and operates a studio, and has produced hundreds of sculptors that depict Black figures of the pivotal movements in American history.³

Achievements

Dwight's efforts as a pilot and sculptor show that resistance can be found in our hobbies and passions. Dwight uses his talent to educate and reconstruct our understanding of history in a way that highlights actors of resistance, from musicians to civil rights leaders and historical figures. He advocates for Black youth, combatting discriminatory stigmas against Black communities. Dwight continues to create works that embody resistance.

¹ Ludolph, E. (2019, July 16). Ed Dwight Was Set to Be the First Black Astronaut. Here's Why That Never Happened. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/16/us/ed-dwight-was-set-to-be-the-first-black-astronaut-heres-why-that-never-happened.html>.

² Brune, A. M. (2015, May 28). Ed Dwight shows 'the angst, all the emotions' of black heroes in sculpture. Retrieved October 29, 2019, from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/may/28/ed-dwight-honouring-americas-black-heroes-in-sculpture#comments>.

³ Ed Dwight's Biography. (n.d.). Retrieved October 15, 2019, from <https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/ed-dwight-39>.

