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**GUIDE TO THE
LOWELL STEWARD PAPERS,
1995-2002**

Collection Number: CEMA 058.

Size Collection: 0.2 linear feet (1 box).

Acquisition Information: Donated by Lowell Steward, 1996; later additions to 2002.

Access restrictions: None.

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Location: Del Norte.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The Lowell Steward Papers mainly consist of materials relating to Lowell Steward's history in the Tuskegee Airmen's 332nd Fighter Group. Steward was captain of the Santa Barbara State College (later known as UCSB) basketball team when Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941. The day after the attack, Steward, along with other members of the team, went to a recruiting office in Santa Barbara to sign up with the army. All of the members of the team were accepted, except for Steward – the only African American on the team. Steward was instead told to report to his draft board in Los Angeles, which he did. Steward was told at this time to go home and wait until he was contacted. While he waited, Steward returned to school, continued playing basketball and graduated with a bachelors degree in physical education in June of 1942.

On July 28, 1942, Steward had waited long enough, and with no contact from his draft board, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Steward chose the air corps specifically because, "They said black people couldn't fly. I said I know that's not true and I joined up to prove it." Steward, however, would have to wait three more months; his recruiter told him the same thing that his draft board had told him: to go home and wait. When summer passed and no word came, Steward contacted the recruiting office, which told him they thought he had already gone. Steward recalls: "I said, 'I'm still here.' So they sent me to Tuskegee [Army Air Field in Tuskegee, Alabama]."

After additional training at Selfridge Air Field in Michigan, Steward's outfit, The 100th Fighter Squadron, was shipped out to Italy, arriving in Naples in January 1944. For almost six months the 100th Fighter Squadron pulled sea air patrol duty, flying out of Capodichino Air Base in Naples. Steward completed 96 missions before his unit became part of the 15th Air Force in June 1944. The 100th Fighter Squadron was then transferred to Ramitelli Air Base where they began escorting bombers – the task for which the Tuskegee Airmen are most remembered today. Harold Wilder Jr. wrote the following in his World War II memoirs: "I don't know where they were stationed. All I know is that after we were flying three-plus hours there they were, suddenly appearing off our wings, joining us...These pilots obviously had a lot to prove, and prove it they did! May the Lord bless them, and the rest of us respect them." Steward flew fighter missions with bomber planes until April 1945 when he was shipped back to Tuskegee AAF to become a flight instructor. He was discharged as captain on July 28, 1946, four years to the day since his enlistment.

When Steward returned to his home city of Los Angeles, again, he faced discrimination. He tried to purchase a house in a GI-financed tract and was denied. That's when he started a career in real estate that would last 40 years. He became a member of Realtift, a black real estate organization and he became one of the first blacks to become a realtor in Los Angeles. He would later go on to become a real estate appraiser.

Steward was the President and founder of the Los Angeles Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen Inc., the chapter was established in 1974. Steward is a recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross Air Medal.

On June 5, 2004, the UCSB Alumni Association honored Lowell Steward with the Lifetime Achievement Award for Public Service.

SCOPE NOTE

The Lowell Steward Papers contains photographs, some correspondence, published articles (newspaper and internet), and a small number of items relating to his involvement with the Tuskegee Airmen.

CONTAINER LIST

Box	Folder	Content
		Articles
1	1	“Pioneering Warrior: Oxnard Vet was Tuskegee Airman 60 years ago”, <i>Ventura County Star</i> , July 22, 2002
1	2	“Tuskegee Airman: Pilot Waged War Against Racism”, <i>Santa Barbara News Press</i> , October 15, 1995
1	3	“The Tuskegee Airmen: The Sky Was the Limit”, from www.afro.com/history/tusk/tuskmain.html , 1996
1	3	“A WWII Legend Takes Flight,” <i>L.A. Life Daily News</i> , August 15, 1995
1	3	Miscellaneous internet articles reviewing <i>Red-Tailed Angels</i> (book) and <i>The Tuskegee Airmen</i> (film), 1996
1	4	Correspondence with Dr. Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., 1995-1996
1	5	Photographs, one photo of five Tuskegee Airmen (Steward included), one photo of five Tuskegee Airmen’s planes in flight, n.d.