

**Cadet Way of Life Committee - Pathfinder Presentation**  
**0930 hrs "Doolittle Hall" 8 Nov 03**

OIC Welcome

- Good Morning, My name is Capt Bobby L. Northern, USAFA CO'96, and I am the acting OIC of the Commandant's Way of Life Committee.

- On behalf of the Commandant of Cadets, Brig General Johnny Weida CO' 78 I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the US Air Force Academy class of 63 and 73 to this landmark event.

- As we celebrate the recognition of three graduates who have courageously etched a path toward a future of excellence and a promise of equality that would forever change the Culture of the Air Force Academy and our country.

- Today we celebrate the Pathfinder.

- Webster's calls the Pathfinder one who finds a path through the previously unexplored wilderness.

- Amongst the courage needed to navigate uncharted territory abides diligence, perseverance, Intelligence, and an adventurous passion for new horizons.

- It is to pathfinders like the three individuals we will celebrate today that we owe the constitution, invention of human flight, and the first steps on the moon.

- In 1959 the class of 1963 entered the then very young United States Air Force Academy. The fact that three of these young men were of an African-American heritage was indeed significant.

- This time in our country's history was characterized by blatant racism and inequality in all areas of American life. The battles against those trying to preserve racial segregation and discrimination were still being fought.

- Their success and failure as cadets could have repercussion for generations to come. Ultimately, they succeeded in their endeavors. The Class of 63' would be the first USAFA class with African American Cadets and the first with African American Graduates.

- These three men were pathfinders. From the beginning they knew there would be adversity - but they pressed forward.

- There were even people here at the Academy who made it clear why they did not want to see them succeed - but they charged forward.

- Ultimately, they knew that some would not judge them by their love for the flag, the effectiveness of their leadership, or the content of their character - yet they stayed the course.

- Their success in all areas of cadet life and their graduation demonstrated their desire and ability to be excellent professionals and let others know that "It Can Be Done".

- They opened the door for future generations. To date the total number of African-American graduates from USAFA exceeds 1600.

- For these reasons, and many more, it is our honor and privilege to recognize these three individuals as Association of Graduates - Way of Life - "Pathfinders".

- At this time I would like to introduce some current cadet members of the Way of Life Committee:

- Our Vice President - Cadet Second Class Aaron Jones from Cadet Squadron 27

- The Squadron Commander of Cadet Squadron 23 - Cadet First Class Tesia Lewis

- Cadet Second Class Shamika Bailey from Cadet Squadron 5

- Cadet Third Class Xzavior Hill from Cadet Squadron 26

- And Cadet Fourth Class Jahmil Edwards from Cadet Squadron 1

- Cadet Second Class Aaron Jones

---

#### VP Presentation

- Good Morning - Today we are proud to honor:

- Charles Vernon Bush

- Colonel (Retired) Isaac Sanders Payne, the 4th

- and Roger Bernard Sims

- with an Association of Graduates - Commemorative Stone - that will be placed at the base of the Pegasus Statue - seen as you entered Doolittle Hall today.

- Their accolades and accomplishments are numerous. For Example:

- Charles Bush's academic prowess as chief of six intelligence teams in Vietnam and an MBA graduate of Harvard Business School. His civilian career spans from starting his own company to serving as an officer of multinational corporations.

- Or Colonel (Retired) "Ike" Payne's astute flying ability and experience, undeniable in assignments in SAC, Vietnam, AF Systems Command, Headquarters

USAF, and The NSA. He is a graduate of the, USAF Test Pilot School, and has accrued over 4900 flying hours in 35 different aircraft. During his illustrious career he flew 432 combat missions.

- Or Roger Bernard Sim's 6'6" grand presence, as he piloted his C124 Globemaster II on missions in CONUS, Vietnam and Europe. He carried the same professionalism to Columbia School of Journalism and his civilian career, as he produced Walter Kronkite's CBS evening news, Charles Kuralt's "Specials" for NBC , and as Chief of the KNBC Orange County California Bureau.

- The following vignette is indicative of the continuing impact and lasting legacy of their presence in the class of '63.

- An African-American graduate in the class of 68' wanted me to relate to you how one of these "Pathfinders" directly effected his Academy experience. Over a year after the class of 63' had graduated, in the fall of 64', this 68'er was a doolie. He was on the verge of leaving the Academy. He was failing academically and militarily. Then, when all appeared to be darkest, the "most hated" upperclassman in 22nd cadet squadron came to this cadet's room. He gave this 68' doolie a lecture that set him straight on what it takes to make it at the Academy. A lecture that resulted in an immediate 180 degree turn around.

- The 68' doolie asked why this member of the class of 66' was coming to his assistance. The response was, "Back in 62' when I was a doolie, I was having similar problems. The biggest black guy I had ever seen, a firstie in the class of 63', came up to me and gave me the same lecture I am giving you. It saved me and I figure I owe him one."

- That member of the class of 66' was Westpoint Mississippi's own Major General (Retired) Graham E. Shirley. The 68' Grad was Maurice Ecung. Later, Maurice's daughter's, Melanie Antonia Class of 01' and Allison Marie Class of 03' and his nephew Robert A. Edison Class of 01', and more than twenty other young people Maurice has sponsored have graduated from the Air Force Academy.

- All of these people can directly trace their Academy heritage back to that 63' Graduate. His Name ? Roger Bernard Sims

- The individuals we recognize today are:

- o Charles Vernon Bush  
§ (Cadet Lewis Presents Stone and Returns)
- o Colonel (Retired) Isaac Sanders Payne, the 4th  
§ (Cadet Bailey Presents Stone and Returns)
- o Roger Bernard Sims  
§ (Cadet Hill Presents Stone and Returns)

VP Close

- Gentlemen, we want to thank you for pointing the way as true pathfinders. We want to thank you for proving the possible. We want to thank you for setting an example with pride and dignity. For these and many other reasons, The United States Air Force Academy - The Association of Graduates Way of Life Affiliate

- The Cadet Way of Life Committee - The Association of Graduates - and Your classmates from the Class of 1963 Salute you and honor your accomplishments with these commemorative stones.

- Your stones will be installed in the circle, at the base of the Pegasus Statue, in front of Doolittle Hall. It Reads:

o Way of Life - 63' Pathfinder - Then the name of the Pathfinder

- This concludes our Formal Presentation. (Now we will have comments from \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_) Would the Awardees and their family members please stay for photos. Thank you all for your attendance today.