

Higgins 52 presented Congressional Gold Medal by Reed 93 for service to country
5/14/15



Alfred Station resident, AU professor emeritus of ceramics, and member of the AU Class of 1952 Wallace “Wally” Higgins was presented with a Congressional Gold Medal May 8, 2015 during an Allegany County (NY) Office for the Aging luncheon at the American Legion, Belmont. The presentation was made by Congressman Tom Reed, R-Corning, AU Class of 1993.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian award in the United States. According to the archives of the House of Representatives, these medals are the highest expressions of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. The medal was first awarded in 1776 to Gen. George Washington by the Second Continental Congress.

Wally spent 11 months in pilot training with the Tuskegee Airmen program in Alabama and served with both the Civil Air Patrol and the Air Corps. He joined the Civil Air Patrol in Rochester at age 17 as a senior at Kendall Central School in Kendall, NY. In the middle of his senior year, he joined the Air Corps. The teenager completed basic training in Biloxi, Miss. After his 11 months at Tuskegee, a “downturn” in the war resulted in less pilot training there; he was transferred to Okinawa.

During the recent medal ceremony, Office for the Aging Director Madeleine Gasdik said noted: “Wally is a true American hero from the time he was a junior in high school. He has committed himself to serving his country, both as a Tuskegee airman and with the Civil Air Patrol and the Army and all the volunteer work he&s done.

“From the time he moved to Allegany County, he has been involved with many volunteer organizations and he&s always been involved with community projects. He&s always made an effort to give back. He&s one of the founding members of the Senior Foundation.”

To read full accounts of the award ceremony and additional details of Wally&s service career, please visit:

http://www.oleantimesherald.com/news/article_a76b090a-f60c-11e4-9794-5fa4fe1b8883.html

or

<http://www.wellsvilledaily.com/article/20150508/NEWS/150509709>