



COLONEL GEORGE T. HUDGENS **(U.S. Army Retired)**

Colonel George T. Hudgens, a native of Arkansas, was involved in the initial integration of the school system of Van Buren, AR in 1957. Following graduation from Van Buren High School, he enrolled in Arkansas Tech University (ATU) and in 1963 became the first African American to graduate from that institution. During his time at ATU he was also an ROTC Distinguished Military Student and was commissioned a 2LT in the Regular Army upon graduation.

COL Hudgens' 29-year-long military career was highlighted by various assignments of increased responsibility. He commanded company-sized units in Vietnam and a Mechanized Infantry Battalion at Fort Carson, CO. In 1983 he was selected to serve as a Regimental Commander at the U. S. Military Academy, where he was responsible for the supervision, training, development, and welfare of 2,400 prospective Army Officers. Following this appointment, he served at the Pentagon as the Inspections Branch Chief for the Army's Inspector General. He led the Army's first "Total Army Special Inspection on Terrorism Counteraction". He also served as Chief of Staff on the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee for President George H.W. Bush in 1988 and as the Committee's Deputy Director for President Bill Clinton in 1992.

Colonel Hudgens' more than 20 awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star for Valor with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters (OLC); the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; the Meritorious Service Medal with 2 OLC; the Air Medal for Valor; the Army Commendation Medal with 1 OLC, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab, and Army Staff identification Badge. Foreign Awards include the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Unit Citation and the Republic of Vietnam Combat Ranger Badge.

COL Hudgens's highest award for valor, the Bronze Star with "V" device, was awarded due to his actions on 17 May, 1970 while serving with the 3rd Ranger Group Task Force during the Vietnam War. While flying over the 36th Ranger Battalion, which had been attacked while extracting from a landing zone, Captain Hudgens detected confusion on the part of the Rangers. Under heavy enemy fire Captain Hudgens landed and gained immediate control of the situation. Troops were dispatched to eliminate the enemy force. The troops on the landing zone were dispersed, extra lift ships were requested and suppressive gunship fire was directed on the enemy. Repeatedly exposing himself to hostile fire, Captain Hudgens organized and assisted in the operation of the landing zone. Due to his actions, the entire battalion was lifted from the area with minimum casualties.

After retirement from the military, COL Hudgens served as a Chief Executive Officer or National Director for several providers of juvenile justice services until 2007. COL Hudgens and his wife, Rosanna, now reside in Silver Spring, MD.