



January 3, 1921 – May 5, 2003

Andrew Silviano Perez, was a Chicago area Optometrist and an original Tuskegee Airman. Dr. Perez was born Aristeo Silviano Rios, Jr. to Mabel Gart and Aristeo Silviano Rios, Sr. in Chicago 1921. His mother died while he was very young and also his father in later years. He was adopted while still a child by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Perez.

As a member of the Chicago “DODO” Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Dr. Perez was actively involved in the Experimental Aircraft Association’s Young Eagles Program. He enjoyed helping to introduce children to the many careers in aviation and the aerospace industry.

Aviator, Community Leader, Medical Professional, Role Model, Mentor and Gentleman

He also loved telling others about the role of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. Dr. Perez was among more than 900 airmen who became part of the “Great Experiment” to see if African Americans could support the nation’s military operations as pilots. After graduating from Tilden Technical High School in Chicago, Dr. Perez served his country as a member of the Army Air Corps flight training program at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. He flew the PT-19, BT-13, and AT-6 aircraft and was a graduate of Class 44F. He later became a radio transmitter-equipment technician and earned his aerial gunner wings after training at Tyndall and Walterboro Army Airfields. He qualified on the B-26, B-17, B-24 bombers, power turrets and other machine gun positions.

After completing his military service, Dr. Perez received a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Roosevelt University in Chicago, and then a doctorate of optometry degree from the Monroe School, which later became part of the Illinois College



of Optometry. As an optometrist, patients and friends began affectionately calling him “Doc” Perez.

In the 1960s and 70s, Dr. Perez taught math and science at Hyde Park Academy High School. One of his students was Illinois Rep. Connie Howard (D-Chicago). Rep. Howard recalled, "I had known him as Mr. Perez, my science teacher, and after I graduated from Hyde Park, I lost track of him," she said. She later sat across from Dr. Perez during hearings in Springfield when he came to lobby the General Assembly on behalf of optometrists, and later also on behalf of the Tuskegee Airmen and the “Friends of Meigs Field”.



Gunnery trainee fires on a scale model aircraft mounted on moving unmanned jeep.

Andrew Silviano Perez

Tuskegee Airman / Optometrist

"He was a very effective speaker," she said. "I have to tell you that the fact that I knew him as a teacher was a little intimidating. When he spoke, I gave him special attention."

Dr. Perez served two terms as First Vice President of the Chicago Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (CDCTAI). And as an active member and volunteer of CDCTAI he worked with the Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles Program. This program has provided more than 6,000 free orientation airplane rides to Chicago-area children.



In addition to serving the community by helping to educate the next generation to the field of aviation, he also served in other leadership positions with the Chicago Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen such as Chair of its Financial Development Committee. He was also President of the Central City Optometric Society; the first Corresponding Secretary and Newsletter Founder for the Chatham Avalon Park Community Council; he was a member/officer of the Chatham Unit of the American Cancer Society; he was a member of the Holy Name Society of St. Dorothy's Church where he initiated the Chess Club; he was active with the Madonna Della Strada Council 5574 of the Knights of Columbus; the American Legion Dorie Miller Post 915; the Chicago Astronomical Society; and the Chatham Business Association.

His medical office of Optometry was located in the community at 110 E. 79th Street. Although they had previously met in college 25 years earlier, Dr. Perez married Dr. Bobbie M. Anthony in 1979. He taught mathematics and physics at Hyde Park High School where he was also an assistant principal.

He is survived by his wife, Bobbie Anthony-Perez; his nieces, Roenia and Tatia Gill; his daughter, Freida M. Chapman-Weisenfeld (Irving); his sister-in-law, Fannie M. Hunter; and his numerous other nieces and grand/god children, including Lynetta and Edrene White; Roenia, Joshua, and Leval Gill; Karla Scott; Jay Levit (Natalia); Chad Wiesenfeld; and Etol, Camille, and Ashley Garrison.

Bobbie Anthony-Perez has created an endowment for the "Andrew Perez Memorial Scholarship" with the Chicago Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen for an engineering or aviation based educational assistance award of \$1500 for Chicago area high school seniors.



Dr. Andrew Silviano Perez