

General Darren McDew Talks Straight



Gen (Ret.) Darren McDew

General (Ret.) Darren McDew, former Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, shared his thoughts on keys to leading effective teams to create culture during AFCOMA's Straight Talk series on December 1, 2022.

A self-proclaimed son of the South, Gen McDew was proudly raised in an Air Force family. He attended DoD schools before integration and experienced the power of education as the great equalizer. After graduating from Virginia Military Institute with an engineering degree, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lt and began pilot training. In an environment with minimal representation, he learned that his reputation and word could never be taken from him.

As a captain in a high visibility position, Gen McDew became more aware of his surroundings and improved his ability to accept critical feedback, even forfeiting credit for his work. These early lessons built a firm foundation upon which he continues to glean.

Gen McDew responded to tough questions from the audience. When choosing team members, the general said, "I rank competence and presence at the top as well as diversity." He went on to say that leaders must recognize the needs of their organizations and the unique value they add to the team. They must fully understand themselves and make their supervisors' priorities their own. "Recognize your supervisor's agenda and guide him/her as appropriate. At times, your higher authorities may need your guidance more than you need theirs," said McDew.

Also, he indicated that leaders must be willing to advocate for others when it is difficult and work through obstacles. "Sometimes, you only survive a toxic work culture instead of transforming it," said McDew. While working through obstacles, the general recommended that you be certain of the reason you serve. "Never ask permission to do your job. You have a job description. Be bold, lead, and execute."

On a question pertaining to feedback, the general said, "I encourage leaders to work diligently, have confidence, be prepared (e.g. reading ahead and writing notes) and be open to feedback without internalizing it." To combat feelings of inadequacy or imposter syndrome, "I promote reassuring myself by engaging in centering activities that build my confidence," said McDew.

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AFCOMA Mentorship Program Benefits



AFCOMA

Founded at the Pentagon
30 June 1989

*"Strengthening
Future Air Force and Space
Force Leaders Through
Mentorship"*

- Exclusive access to a network of active-duty and retired Air Force/Space Force mentors
- Greater than 90 percent satisfaction rate for our mentorship program
- Discussion of "straight talk" mentoring forum topics including *Preparation for Command, Leadership Philosophy, Toxic Leadership, Conflict Management, and Officer Evaluations*
- Opportunity to mentor ROTC cadets in tandem with the Cadet Program
- Advise DAF (Air Force and Space Force) senior leaders regarding mentorship needs and pressing issues
- Mentees experience professional growth and development in the mentoring cohorts (recently completed successful 2nd cohort of 50 participants)

From the Chairman's Desk



Did You Know

Since its inception in 1989, AFCOMA has paved the way for new Lieutenants to make a smooth transition from campus life to the military.

AFCOMA has also helped develop officers through structured mentoring so that all officers and civilians can reach their maximum potential in the Department of the Air Force.

AFCOMA is the "mother" of Air Force mentoring and hundreds of officers have testimonials of the positive results that mentoring produces.

Greetings AFCOMA Family!

The Winter issue of our newsletter—*The Mentor*—is *here!*

We have continued our "straight talk" series with yet another outstanding forum featuring General (Ret.) Darren McDew, former Commander, U.S. Transportation Command.

General McDew reflected on his noteworthy 36 years of leadership experiences in the Air Force and provided significant wisdom in his responses to insightful, thought-provoking questions. We relished his presence and invited him to future forums—he enthusiastically accepted!

We've begun planning our 34th anniversary gala, and we cannot be successful without you! If you'd like to volunteer to help with the gala, please contact Maj Lori Gilbert, our project leader, at Lorc.gilbert@gmail.com.

Also, if you know of members who are celebrating a significant award or recognition, please reach out to our newsletter editor, Maj (Dr.) Enesha Hicks, eneshaj2@gmail.com, so the family can celebrate with them.

Thank you for all that you do to advance the cause of mentoring!



Dr. Al Moseley

Crucial Conversations Require Transparent Leaders



Brig Gen Terrence Adams

Brig Gen Terrence Adams is the Director of Cyberspace Operations and Warfighter Communications at Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon. The Tuskegee, Alabama native is a mentor at his core.

When asked about his journey from E-1 (Army Private) to one star, he shares how initially being left out of the leadership conversation prepared him for his current position. As a food service specialist, he quickly learned despite misperceptions, he was more than his job.

His leadership tenants are to listen, lift, and love based on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s approach. Leaders must first listen to their team and appropriately assess needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Understanding a member's totality of strength allows us to optimally mentor and guide him or her.

We lift our team by encouraging them to get their slice of the P.I.E. (plan, investment, and education). Additionally, we should assist them in honing their life goals, investing in themselves beyond finances, and obtaining as much transferrable knowledge as possible. Remind them to be bold and not to discount themselves. Lastly, demonstrate love by being supportive of their needs and inspiring them to face obstacles directly.

Gen Adams maximized educational opportunities through the Army before it was common and learned the power of followership. Successful leaders must fully grasp who they are and are not in addition to being able to assess team dynamics and knowing when to follow.

Whether leading in the civilian sector, austere environments, or in garrison, leadership on all levels is people-centric. It involves familiarization with your M.A.P. (mission, airmen, and partners) in the Air Force. Avoid being hindered by your weaknesses; leverage your strengths and learn from failure. Distinguish yourself from peers by being rooted in and motivated by your purpose ("why") which fuels you when energy is depleted. Choose diverse mentors whom you trust as confidantes to discuss tough issues and help navigate your career/life.

The general's passion for people has translated to several initiatives including the Women's Air and Space Foundation, a promising organization that recognizes the accomplishments of women. Diversity is key to strengthening organizations which he emulates through the Crucial Convo forum with his team. No one knows everything; therefore, it is vital to connect with people who are strong in your areas of weakness.

Gen Adams emphasizes that commanders/leaders should be selected primarily based on their ability to connect with, care for, and lead people then on their functional skills. He continues his legacy as a transformational leader by developing robust leaders at every stage which is his passion.

Optimal
Command
Selection

65%
People
Skills

35%
Functional
Skills

Crucial Conversations Require Transparent Leaders



Col Felicia Burks

Colonel Felicia Burks is a highly transformational and inspirational leader who believes in developing others. As the 82nd Medical Group Commander, she comprehends the importance of focusing on readiness and building future leaders.

In a multi-generational environment, it is vital to understand our shared goals, motivation, and mindset to strategize beyond our adversaries, especially as a leader in the Profession of Arms. Division is often used to weaken teams and structures; hence, it is key to sharpen our creative and critical thinking abilities. To create a culture of connectedness, it is vital that we call people in versus calling people out. An African proverb corroborated, "if you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together."

Mentors can serve in duality by sharing their experiences and also coaching their proteges. Mentors develop others when they tap into intellectual curiosity by asking questions and supporting proteges with key insights they need to rise higher, leading to discovery of their own answers. This approach also serves as a catalyst for them to transition from bouts of stagnation.

Col Burks' faith optimizes her and is an accountability tool for her to practice spiritual disciplines and demonstrate love to others. She attests to the benefits of growing through valley moments (unfavorable circumstances) and shifting to the paradigm that life is happening for us to move from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Valleys have the potential to mature leaders if they seek the lessons learned amidst moments of adversity.

Col Burks is a pioneer who inspires others toward intentional living and resiliency rather than ambivalent acceptance of obstacles. She is a breast cancer survivor who received the disheartening news almost nine years ago directly before assuming command overseas. This battle was unexpected, with no family history or apparent risk factors, but she was prepared for the fight in which she conquered, overcame, and continuously thrives! She views challenges as opportunities to grow.

Like the ACE (agile combat employment) concept, Col Burks encourages proactive leadership with an emphasis on readiness and early career development. She leads based on integrity, compassion, competence, authenticity, accountability, respect, resilience, empathy, and enthusiasm (I.C.A.R.E.). Col Burks credits her tight circle of family, friends, leaders, mentors, peers, church, and Airmen with supporting her along her journey as a leader. She is a proponent of mentorship and suggests techniques such as reading books, listening to developmental digital content, attending conferences/seminars, and studying biographies of people that one may admire to support them on their unique path. Success leaves clues!

She also recommends forming a personal board of advisors from trusted mentors to provide wise counsel on game-changing decisions. Col Burks continues to pave the way for the next generation from her endowment scholarship to the Crucial Convo forum.

Col Paul G. Patton Legacy Scholarship

Application Period is Now Open!

Who was Colonel Paul G. Patton?

Colonel Patton was an original founding member of AFCOMA and its first president. He mentored hundreds of junior officers and motivated them to be the best possible. His tremendous labor of love and life's work of mentoring culminated in the renaming of the AFCOMA Scholarship Fund on October 30, 2021 to his namesake.



Col Paul G. Patton
1942 - 2021

How Can You Apply for a Colonel Paul G. Patton Legacy Scholarship?

You must be enrolled in the Air Force Junior ROTC program as a graduating High School senior or be enrolled in Air Force ROTC as a freshman, sophomore, or junior at a college or university beginning in the Fall of the application year. As a Col Patton legacy scholarship recipient, the award also recognizes your contributions as a future leader and provides inspiration and encouragement to you as you pursue a career in the Air Force or Space Force as a commissioned officer.

How Will Your Scholarship Application be Evaluated?

The AFCOMA scholarship team will evaluate your application in five major areas:

- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Performance
- ◆ Significant self-improvement
- ◆ Community/college involvement
- ◆ Essay

When is the Scholarship Application Due?

Scholarship applications are due by midnight on March 10th. The scholarship team is notifying high school and college AFROTC leaders in the Washington D.C. metro area as well as the East Coast regarding the application period and due date.

Who Can You Contact for Additional Information?

AFCOMA VP for Awards and Recognitions: afcomaincscholarship.com or tieu.myers@gmail.com.

ROTC Spotlight

AFCOMA Members Infuse Mentorship at AFROTC Detachment 019

The AFROTC Det 019 Alumni Association had its mentoring kickoff meeting for Academic Year 2023 with AS300 cadets at Det 019. Col Scott Hall, Mentor Program Coordinator for the Det 019 Alumni Association and Assistant VP for AFCOMA Cadet Program, also participated in the event.

See the LinkedIn post for more details: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/afrotc-det-019-alumni-association_the-alumni-association-mentoring-committee-activity-7007823333085859840-kEqv?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

Leadership Tip

Conditioning

By Colonel (Sel.) Dear Beloved

When we think of conditioning, we often think of the physical aspect, but I believe the most important conditioning of all is mental! Being self-disciplined drives success in all other areas of my life. Without self-discipline, I can't go to sleep at the same time every night. I can't eat properly. I can't stay away from alcohol. I couldn't do the boatloads of reading and writing required to complete Army War College by distance. I can't keep track of all my commitments.

Self-discipline starts in our childhood. If your parents frequently appeased you as a child, you may have to work harder to be disciplined. The best way I have found to instill self-discipline is to set long-term goals. The more we think in the present without a long-term anchor, the more likely we are to seek instant, self-gratification at the expense of success in the marathon of life.

If you set a goal of being financially secure in twenty years, that will impact the decisions you make today. If you set a goal to be mobile, active, and mentally present as a grandparent, that will also impact the decisions you make today.

The biggest mistake I have seen is that people set long-term goals associated with rank and position, but forget about the long-term goals associated with lifestyle! Health is wealth and without it, rank and position are meaningless. Even the world's richest cannot buy health to overcome decades of abuse to the body and organs from addiction and vices (i.e., drugs/alcohol/cafeine/sex addiction).

Rich or poor, the body likes the same healthy foods and it works hard to get rid of the bad stuff. Yet, our mental conditioning stays under constant attack from embedded advertisements and subliminal marketing to convince us to consume poisons like processed sugar, caffeine, and ethanol. With self-discipline, it is possible to overcome this and regain balance in the marathon of life!

General Lloyd “Fig” Newton Inducted into the National Hall of Fame



Gen (Ret.) Lloyd “Fig” Newton

On October 27, 2022, the National Defense University (NDU) honored Gen (Ret.) Fig Newton, Brig Gen (Ret.) Wilma Vaught, and Ambassador Wanda Nesbitt with an induction ceremony into the National Hall of Fame. Lt Gen Michael Plehn, the 17th president of the university, officiated the induction ceremony. The ceremony was held at NDU’s campus, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

The National Hall of Fame program provides a prestigious and visible means of honoring NDU graduates whose record of service in uniform and/or as a civilian at the national, state, and/or local levels merits special recognition from the university.

This ceremony honored those alumni who have achieved and sustained a distinguished record of service to the people of the United States of America.

Gen Newton was a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College, Class of 1976, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Class of 1985.

The general is a retired Executive Vice President, Pratt & Whitney Military Engines, East Hartford, Connecticut, and a former commander of Air Education and Training Command. He is a command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours in the T-37, T-38, F-4, F-15, F-16, C-12, and the F-117 stealth fighter. He made history as the first African American pilot to fly with the U.S. Air Force Aerial Demonstration Squadron, “The Thunderbirds.”

Gen Newton played a significant leadership role in the formative years of AFCOMA when it was the Air Force “ROCKS” Briefing Team. From 1987 to 1988, Col Fig Newton, at that time, served as the senior advisor to the team. He also traveled with the team visiting AFROTC detachments at historically black colleges and universities.

On hand to witness the induction ceremony was Col (Ret) Ken McKinney, AFCOMA Treasurer and Immediate-Past AFCOMA Chairman, Maj (Ret.) Don Newton, Jr., (Gen Newton’s nephew), and Dr. Al Moseley, AFCOMA’s Chairman.

Left-to-Right: Col (Ret) Ken McKinney,
Gen (Ret) Fig Newton, Maj (Ret) Don
Newton, Jr., and Dr. Al Moseley, Col (Ret).



General Larry O. Spencer Appointed as Board Chair of 5Star Life



Gen (Ret.) Larry O. Spencer

According to a Business Wire release of City Biz, on January 4, 2023, the 5Star Life Insurance Company appointed General (Ret.) Larry O. Spencer, as the Board Chair. The appointment was effective on January 1, 2023. Gen Spencer will retain his position as President of 5Star Life and President of the Armed Forces Benefit Association.

Gen Spencer spent over 40 years in the United States Air Force. His last assignment was as the Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. As Vice Chief, he presided over the Air Staff and served as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Requirements Oversight Council and Deputy Advisory Working Group. He assisted the Chief of Staff with organizing, training, and equipping over 664,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas.

Gen Spencer has commanded a squadron, group, and wing, and he was Vice Commander of the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center. He was also the first Air Force officer to serve as Assistant Chief of Staff in the White House Military Office.

While assigned to the Pentagon, Gen Spencer played a significant leadership role in the early days of AFCOMA's predecessor organization called AFCOMAP, Air Force Cadet Officer Mentor Action Program. From 2006 to 2008, then Brig Gen and later Maj Gen Spencer served as the ninth President of AFCOMAP.

Following his retirement, the general served as President of the Air Force Association. He currently serves on the boards of Whirlpool Corporation, Triumph Group, Inc., and Haynes International, Inc.

Gen Spencer received his Bachelor of Science Degree in industrial engineering technology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and has two Master of Science degrees. He was commissioned through Officer Training School in 1980 as a distinguished graduate. Gen Spencer is the author of the book *Dark Horse: General Larry O. Spencer and His Journey from the Horseshoe to the Pentagon*.

Please read additional information on Gen Spencer's appointment at the source link below.

Source: <https://www.citybiz.co/article/364493/5star-life-appoints-general-larry-spencer-usaf-ret-as-board-chair/>

CHAIRMAN'S OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND INITIATIVES

The chart below provides the Chairman's objectives, goals, and initiatives for the 2022-2023 operational year: six objectives, eight goals, and seven initiatives.

Here's a status update:

- Objective 1: Completed two of the five mentoring forums.
- Objective 2: Chapter activations are still in progress and the membership continues to grow.
- Objective 3: Major Lori Gilbert volunteered as the 34th anniversary gala project leader. The awards & recognition team is notifying AFROTC detachments and JROTC units regarding the application process for the Col Paul G. Patton Legacy Scholarship.
- Objective 4: Publicized the Fall 2022 and the Winter 2022 issues of The Mentor.
- Objective 5: The signing of the AFCOMA and Department of the Air Force MOU is imminent.
- Objective 6: All initiatives are on track.

Objectives:	Goals and Initiatives
Objective 1: Provide Mentorship for Professional Development of Officers, Civilians, and Cadets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1: Conduct 5 Mentoring Forums (One is a Pre-Gala Event) • Goal 2: Conduct 4 ROTC Campus Visits (2 In-Person) • Goal 3: Establish Automated Mentoring Connection and Conduct 1 Mentoring Cohort
Objective 2: Expand AFCOMA's Reach in the U.S. and Overseas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1. Establish 2 Chapters (Virtual or Non-Virtual) • Goal 2. Increase Membership 50%
Objective 3: Provide Awards and Recognition, and Fellowship with AFCOMA Members and Supporters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1. Host 34th AFCOMA Gala and Pre-Mentoring Session • Goal 2. Award 6 Cadet Scholarships (\$2,500 Each) • Initiative 1: Revamp Awards and Recognition for AFCOMA Members per Bylaws
Objective 4: Share Information Internally and Externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1. Publicize 4 Quarterly Newsletters
Objective 5: Build a Collaborative Relationship with the DAF and AFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative 1: Sign DAF-AFCOMA MOU • Initiative 2: Investigate Hosting an AFCOMA Booth at the 2023 AFA Convention
Objective 6: Enhance AFCOMA Operations and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative 1: Review AFCOMA Bylaws and Recommend Changes • Initiative 2: Trademark AFCOMA Logo • Initiative 3: Establish Vet Transition Program • Initiative 4: Investigate and Recommend AFCOMA Paraphernalia (e.g., shirts, hats, coins, ink pens, cups, etc.)

Are you interested in starting an AFCOMA chapter at your location?

For information on how to get started, contact:

Mr. Ron Cleaves, Lt Col (Ret), Corporate Outreach and Strategic Relations

ronald.cleaves@gmail.com

FINANCE AND TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Investing in These Turbulent Times By JJ Conway, Financial Planner and Coach

Crypto crashed. IRAs and 401Ks are down. Real estate is slipping. This leaves hardworking military and veterans wondering, “should I invest in such turbulent times?”

Real-world Inflation Outpaces Cost-of-living Adjustments

The annual cost-of-living increases for retiree pay historically have fallen 1-3% below real-world inflation. For example, if your cost of living is \$4,000 a month, and your military retirement income, after taxes is \$5,000, you might be excited to have an extra \$1,000 with no extra work.

Fast forward 20 years, however, and using data obtained from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, your cost of living rises to \$19,707 a month and your retirement check is only worth \$13,563 per month. Add another 10 years, the picture gets worse: Now your living expenses are \$43,743 each month but your retirement check is only worth \$22,338. *This is why it's important to invest even in turbulent times!*

Systematic Investing Versus Speculating

Investing in turbulent times means understanding the difference between “systematic investing” versus “speculating.” An investment is something that gives you a return on your money. Speculation is buying into something because the market is appreciating rapidly (or is predicted to).

Research, research, research! Suppose you buy real estate at retail price expecting to cash in on the appreciation in later years but have done no research on zoning changes or the rental market ensuring there's a positive cash flow after accounting for mortgage, repairs, and vacancy. This type of speculation often results in losing big money in real estate. Savvy investors only buy property that immediately adds value to their portfolio. In other words, they make their money when they buy.

Also, speculating is a highly risky form of investing. When a new technology emerges, speculating would be buying into as many as possible in hopes of getting rich. Systemic investing would be watching for a year or two to see which companies showed signs of long-term viability, then invest. As a speculator, you might gain a huge ROI, but can you absorb the huge losses if the companies fail? Note: Crypto would be considered “speculation” rather than a “systematic investment” because of the lack of performance and regulatory guidance.

What type of investment is right for you? It depends! Your personality, financial goals, and your willingness to either do the research or pay someone else are considerations. If you're new to investing, learn about index funds in the do-it-yourself investing guide at Clark.com or find a real estate investing association of local investors who can help you succeed. **Words of Caution: Regardless of what type of investment you engage in, please remember to ONLY invest money you can afford to lose.**

Trivia Questions

The Mentor Fall Issue Winner:

There was no winner for the trivia question below.

Question: Who was the first official member of the Space Force to be sworn in and what was the year?

Answer: Gen. John "Jay" Raymond in 2020

The Mentor Winter Issue New Question:

What was the name of the organization that is credited with AFCOMA's origin and which year was it established?

IMPORTANT: The first AFCOMA member to respond with the correct answer wins!

Send your answer to FutureYr30@aol.com

CALENDAR EVENTS/UPDATES

JANUARY 2023

AFCOMA Meeting

19 Jan 2023, 7:00 pm-8:00 pm EST

Office Call with SAF/DI

20 Jan 2023, 3:00 pm-4:00 pm EST

34th AFCOMA Gala Kickoff Meeting

24 Jan 2023, 7:00 pm-8:00 pm EST

Veterans Benefits Presentation

26 Jan 2023, 7:00 pm-8:00 pm EST

FEBRUARY 2023

AFCOMA Meeting

16 Feb 2023, 7:00pm-8:00pm EST

Mentoring Forum

23 Feb 2023, 7:00 pm EST

Mentoring Program Cohort #3 Kickoff

AFROTC Campus Visit, TBA

MARCH 2023

Scholarship Applications Due

10 Mar 2023, Midnight EST

AFCOMA Meeting

16 Mar 2023, 7:00pm-8:00pm EST

AFROTC Campus Visit, TBA

STAY CONNECTED

Want more information about AFCOMA or the programs we offer?

CADET PROGRAM

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MENTORING PROGRAM

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VETERANS OUTREACH

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CHAPTER ACTIVATION

Mr. Ron Cleaves
Ronald.cleaves@gmail.com

AFCOMA WEBSITE

www.afcoma.org

NEW BOARD MEMBER/VACANCY

Captain Tyler Relph

Assistant VP, Veterans Outreach

Captain Relph is a Critical Care Nurse
David Grant Medical Center, Travis AFB, CA

VP, Finance (VACANT)

Interested in holding a board position?
Contact the AFCOMA Chairman at
FutureYr30@aol.com.

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THE MENTOR