



FALCON
FOUNDATION



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

**MAJOR GENERAL
ROBERT J. SMITH**

U.S. AIR FORCE

Major General Robert J. Smith

Major General Robert J. Smith has distinguished himself in both military and commercial aviation. In both fields, his achievements are significant and impressive and have contributed to development, growth and efficiency. Over the years, General Smith's work has served not only to strengthen our military position and security but also to advance commercial air transportation.

For almost 20 years, as President of the Falcon Foundation, his work, energy, foresight, integrity and leadership have brought this institution to a stable and significant position. As one of its founders, General Smith steered the Foundation successfully through its early days of formation and basic policy. Considering the mission of the Foundation, which is to provide scholarships to preparatory schools for motivated young people seeking admission to the United States Air Force Academy and a career in the Air Force, his work has been of real and lasting value. During the period of his term as President of The Falcon Foundation, hundreds of young men have attended preparatory school with Falcon Scholarships and have gained admission to the Academy. Many are now serving as officers in the Air Force.

General Smith later served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of The Falcon Foundation and thus his experience, dedication and efforts continued to be applied toward strengthening the Academy and the Air Force.

General Smith was an enlisted man in World War I from July 1917 to December 1918. He had nearly attained officer status when the Armistice was signed. His Machine Gun Class at Camp Hancock would have been graduated on Christmas Day.

In 1942, he joined the Army Air Forces, was commissioned directly as a Lieutenant Colonel and assigned to duty at Headquarter AAF in Washington, D.C. In only two month he rose to the rank of full Colonel and soon to the rank of Brigadier General. In 1957, he was commissioned a Major General, U.S. Air Force Reserve. During his World War II duty, General Smith held important command positions with the Air Transport Command with stations in Washington, Cairo, Casablanca, and others. In these positions, he accumulated many hours of flying time as a Command Pilot. His work with the Air Transport Command helped to lay the foundation for a global network of airways for commercial aviation.

In 1946, shortly after General Smith left the Service, he became the President of Pioneer Air Lines. At the same time, he took on another job as Commander of the 309th Bomb Division, Air Force Reserves, with headquarters at Hensley Field, Texas. Under his leadership, Pioneer Air Lines continued to develop and grow. His demonstrated know-how and leadership in broad aviation circles brought him wide recognition and led to his election as President of the National Air Council, an organization then dedicated to promoting the influence of aviation in world affairs while assuring that the United States maintained adequate air power.

The Honorable Stuart Symington accepted the position as Chairman of the National Security Resources Board in 1950. At that time, this was one of America's toughest and touchiest jobs. Mr. Symington chose Robert J. Smith of Dallas as his Vice Chairman. General Smith took a leave-of-absence as President of Pioneer Air Lines to accept this challenging position.

Major General Robert J. Smith

A native of Knoxville, Tennessee, General Smith received his education in law and economics at Jefferson and Northwestern Universities. He was admitted to the Texas Bar in 1932 and gained the privilege of practicing before the U.S. Supreme Court. Other positions he has held include:

General Traffic Manager – American Airways
(predecessor of American Airlines)
Executive Vice President – Braniff Air Lines
Director – Continental Air Lines
Director – First National Bank of Dallas
Director and Chairman – Federal Reserve
Bank of Dallas
Member, Advisory Committee – Export -
Import Bank of Washington
Member of Executive, Finance & Investment
Committees – Republic National Life
Insurance Company
Director – Dallas Chamber of Commerce
Director – Dallas Council of World Affairs

General Smith's service awards and decorations include: Legion of Merit, Air Medal, Commendation Medal, World War I Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and Order of Nishan Iftaker (Tunisia).

General Smith was a quiet, thoughtful man of inexhaustible energy with a personality that won friends and earned the respect of those who knew him. He was a large and neat person who moved rapidly but was sure-footed and always had detailed knowledge of his business. He delegated responsibility but chose his subordinates with care. He was warm, low pressure and easy mannered, but a man who - in the end - achieved good and lasting results in his many undertakings.

He passed away December 31, 1989, just three months short of his 91st birthday.

Dear General Bellis:

General Robert James Smith was a dedicated patriot and Air Force officer, and he knew the importance of a good education. As his daughter and grandchildren, we lovingly sponsor an annual scholarship in his name through the Falcon Foundation.

Sincerely,

Jean Smith Snodgrass

Jean Smith Snodgrass

Barbara Jean Lauratis

Katherine Ann Lauratis

James Laurence Lauratis



The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to College or Preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

Although it is a separate organization, the Falcon Foundation works closely with USAFA.