



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

LIEUTENANT COLONEL
THEODORE "TURTLE" WILSON

U.S. AIR FORCE

Lieutenant Colonel Theodore “Turtle” Wilson

A Chicago native, Theodore Wilson lived life as few others do: OUT LOUD, out front and in full afterburner every minute of every day. If you were lucky enough to have had him touch your life, you were forever better for it. He had a way of lighting up any room he walked into and always found, and brought out, the best in others. If you were blessed enough to have had him as a friend, you knew he always “had your back.”

Theodore was appointed to the Air Force Academy in 1986. Interviewed by a Chicago based newspaper as a 3rd class cadet, he described the “rigid challenges” of the USAFA as “a great place to start, especially for young minorities” and that “you can never push yourself too far—if you have a goal you should push yourself to the limit, reach out and get what you want. Sometimes it takes a lot of time and hard work, but in most cases, the end justifies the means.” As a graduate of Gregor Mendel Catholic High Prep School, he stated the school provided him with the “sense of discipline that is really needed when you go to the Academy.”

Lt Col Wilson graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1990 and excelled in the intelligence community thereafter. His experience in political-military policy and analysis, intelligence operations, and as an instructor spanned a career of twenty years. His career also included numerous deployments and leadership positions; as the Commander, National Intelligence Cell, U.S. Forces, Pristina, Kosovo, and as the Deputy Chief of Intelligence Plans, Multi-National Force-Iraq. He served in leadership at HQ US European Command J2 Plans, and at the Joint Staff J2 Directorate in his final tour of active duty. He retired from active duty in 2010.

Upon retirement, Ted joined The MITRE Corporation where his work included a multi-month “deployment” to Afghanistan, providing systems engineering for HQ U.S. Africa Command, and helping in the design and stand-up of a new Joint Operations Center at Campbell Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany. As in the military, Ted touched the lives of his fellow co-workers around the world. He always strove to DO better, BE better and to MAKE OTHERS BETTER in everything they did. His energy when he took on a task or project was unstoppable.

It was on one of Ted’s several assignments in Germany that he discovered one of his true passions...the bike! On two wheels, he rode his way into many a person’s heart. While on one of his early rides, he got the name “TURTLE” and he embraced his new nickname with a zeal unlike anything else.

In his own words as interviewed for a MITRE podcast *Thinking like a Turtle*:

“I introduce myself with ‘Hi, I’m TURTLE; I’m slow and lethargic’ and that creates a laugh out of most folks as I run into the room with my hair on fire. But it’s a good icebreaker, right? It kind of takes everyone out of their ‘kung fu stance’ and allows you to lighten an atmosphere and try to focus on the things that I like focusing on, which is bringing some optimism and positivity to the room.

“...I try to eliminate as much negativity as I can from almost anything and everything and provide new ways to tackle problems, because that’s fun. That’s getting outside your comfort zone into that magic area.”

Lieutenant Colonel Theodore “Turtle” Wilson

TURTLE’s academic accomplishments included a Bachelor of Science from the USAFA, a Master of Science from the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, and a Master of Science from George Mason University. He was a graduate of USAF Squadron Officer’s School, Air Command & Staff College, and Air War College. He was a life-long learner with numerous professional certificates.

Major Awards and Decorations:

- Defense Meritorious Service Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster
- Meritorious Service Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster
- Joint Service Commendation Medal
- Army Commendation Medal
- Air Force Commendation Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters
- Joint Service Achievement Medal
- Air Force Achievement Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster
- Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

Always radiating positivity, TURTLE is remembered for his booming laughter and skills that benefited all of us... endless positivity, support, and generosity.



The Falcon Foundation,

The TURTLE Effect Foundation is proud to sponsor the Lt Col Theodore TURTLE Wilson Scholarship for young ROCKSTAR individuals to become the best human beings they can be in their careers in the United States Air Force, and to pass on their acquired gifts of duty, strength, love, friendship, knowledge, endurance, and compassion which were at the core of TURTLE Wilson—essentially the “TURTLE Effect.”

Sincerely,

Gwenn Afton



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.