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**FREDERICK W. SMITH POSTHUMOUSLY RECEIVES
BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES E. MCGEE UNITY AWARD
FROM FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL**

*Annual award bestowed on an individual who exemplifies
the spirit of unity and shared values that were prevalent during WWII*

Washington, D.C. - The Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) today announced that it has posthumously presented its fifth annual UNITY Award to Frederick W. Smith, founder and former chairman of FedEx Corp. and the co-chairman of the National World War II Memorial campaign.

Named for a true gentleman, Air Force Brigadier General Charles E. McGee was an original Tuskegee Airman, this award is a significant recognition of those actively working for the betterment of their community and beyond, and for living up to the moral integrity exemplified by Gen. McGee and his fellow members of the "Greatest Generation." Gen. McGee passed away in January 2022 at age 102. This significant recognition has previously been awarded to Robin Roberts, The Honorable Norm Mineta, Steven Spielberg, and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur.

To highlight this spirit of unity and Gen. McGee's enduring values and noted accomplishments, Friends of the National World War II Memorial is proud to posthumously present the Brigadier General Charles E. McGee UNITY Award to Smith, in recognition of his pivotal role in the creation of the National World War II Memorial and his extraordinary commitment to service and philanthropy. His impact in his hometown of Memphis and across the country is simply unmatched.

"Fred Smith embodied the very spirit of the Greatest Generation: service before self, quiet determination, and an unwavering belief in the power of unity," said Friends chair Jane Droppa. "From his time as a Marine in Vietnam to building a company that connected the world, Smith understood that progress is achieved when people work together toward a shared mission."

"Our father, Fred Smith, believed deeply that honoring our nation's veterans was both a responsibility and a privilege," said Samantha Smith Atkinson, director, FedEx Government Affairs. "His leadership in supporting the National World War II Memorial reflected his lifelong commitment to service, unity, and remembrance. At FedEx, we continue to be guided by his example, connecting people, supporting those who serve, and ensuring that the sacrifices of the Greatest Generation are never forgotten."

Smith's dedication to honoring the service and sacrifice of America's World War II generation extended far beyond his remarkable achievements in business. As co-chairman of the fundraising campaign for the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., Smith worked alongside former Senator Bob Dole and other national leaders to secure private donations that made the memorial a reality on the National Mall. His leadership helped drive public awareness and financial support for a project that recognized the courage and unity of the "Greatest Generation," ensuring that the Memorial would stand as a lasting tribute to the more than 16 million Americans who served in uniform and the millions more who supported the war effort at home.

Smith's commitment to veterans and military history was deeply personal. A Marine Corps veteran himself, he drew on his own experience of service and the legacy of family members who served in World War II to champion the memorial project, helping to bridge private philanthropy and national

remembrance. In addition to his role with the World War II Memorial, he also co-chaired the campaign for the National Museum of the Marine Corps, further underscoring his lifelong commitment to honoring those who served and preserving their stories for future generations.

When we search for positive role models, we can look to the World War II Memorial, and we can look to the lives of Gen. McGee and Smith for inspiring examples of honor, integrity, and unity.

The 5th Annual Brigadier General Charles E. McGee UNITY Award presentation video will be released on Thursday, December 18 at 10 a.m. ET and will be available on Friends' [website](#) and social media channels ([YouTube](#), [Vimeo](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)).

About Friends of the National World War II Memorial (www.wwiimemorialfriends.org):

Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., as a sacred place of remembrance, learning, and inspiration. Established in 2007 by the Memorial's creators, Friends leads efforts to maintain this iconic site, ensuring it remains a must-see destination for over five million visitors annually. Through meaningful ceremonies, impactful educational programs, and vital preservation initiatives, Friends honors the legacy of the Greatest Generation and shares the enduring lessons of World War II, inspiring unity, shared values, pride in America, and hope for the future.

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