

# Arkansas Black History

Courtesy of Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum



Cornelius Robinson Coffey (1903-1994) was born in Newport (Jackson County). Coffey developed a love of flying at 13 after riding with a traveling barnstormer in his hometown. After moving to Chicago in 1925, he applied at the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical University, but was initially turned away because of his race. He was later admitted and graduated at the top of his class. In 1938, Coffey founded the Coffey School of Aeronautics in Chicago, which trained over 1,500 pilots. Coffey's work as an aviation instructor paved the way for generations of future pilots. To learn more about pioneers like Cornelius Robinson Coffey or to find more examples of Black excellence, visit Mosaic Templars Cultural Center.

