

(Transcript: Museum Spotlighters)

(A photo of the front of The Hattiesburg Cultural Center)

The Hattiesburg Area Historical Society Museum has placed the spotlight on six individuals with Hattiesburg roots.

(A photo of Dee Thornton Abbott)

In alphabetical order, Dee Thornton Abbott (1918-2016) served as a US Naval officer for 33 years. She subsequently returned home and pursued a 20 year career at Hattiesburg High where she taught general business and English courses.

(A photo of Jessie L. Brown)

Jessie L. Brown (1926-1950) was the US Navy's first African-American fighter pilot. Killed in action while serving in the Korean conflict, his name appears on the building that houses the Forrest County Tax Collector's Office on Main Street. The Naval ship, USS Jessie L. Brown, was also named in his honor.

(A photo of Evelyn Gandy)

Evelyn Gandy (1920-2007) practiced law in Hattiesburg for a time, then went on to become the first woman appointed to any number of state government positions. She was elected to the office of Lieutenant Governor and served from 1976 to 1980.

(A photo of A. J. Jones)

A. J. Jones (1920-2014) served in World War II as a US Navy fighter pilot. He returned to Hattiesburg to pursue a career in finance. His childhood love of baseball eventually lead him to help organize The Century Club and The Hardwood Club which later became The Eagle Club.

(A photo of Edmo Merkel)

Edmo Merkel (1897-1985) was a pharmacist mate and ambulance driver during World War I. Merkel was recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart for his acts of bravery while under fire. Merkel went on to become a coach and physical education teacher.

(A photo of Martha Joyce Thornton Smith)

Martha Joyce Thorton Smith (1925-2013) was a 1942 graduate of Hattiesburg High. She devoted 47years of her life as a Red Cross volunteer where she provided help to victims of earthquakes, hurricanes,

floods and fires in different regions of the United States and in countries around the world.

(A photo of the fountain next to the Hattiesburg Cultural Center)

Our 6 museum spotlighters have stories that extend well beyond the time available in a brief video. You're invited to visit the historical society museum to learn more about these and other men and women who both shaped our town and were shaped by our town. The place that we call home, the home that we call Hattiesburg.

(A photo of the HAHS logo)