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Parker-Gray anniversary celebrates Brig. Gen. Leo A. Brooks, Sr.

This year's annual Parker-Gray School anniversary celebration, the school's 103rd, acknowledges one of the school's most prominent alumni, retired Brig. Gen. Leo Brooks, Sr. All are welcome to participate in the celebration on Saturday at 3 p.m. at the Nanny J. Lee Centers Kauffman Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public.

Brigadier General Leo A. Brooks, Sr. was born in Alexandria on Aug. 9, 1932. He graduated from Parker-Gray High School in 1950, when education in Virginia was segregated, and from Virginia State University four years later.

Brooks received his commission in the Army in 1954 as a Distinguished Graduate

of the Reserve Officer Training Corps. He served in Alaska, and two tours in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. During his military career, he earned a master's degree in financial management from The George Washington University.

Brooks received his commission in the Army Quartermaster Corps as a Distinguished Graduate of the Reserve Officer Training Corps. His awards include: the Army Distinguished Service Medal; Defense Superior Service Medal; Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters; Bronze Star Medal; Meritorious Service Medal; Joint Service Commendation Medal; and Army Commendation Medal. In 1984, Brooks retired as a brigadier

general because he retired less than three years after promotion to major general.

After retiring from the Army, Brooks accepted the position of city manager of Philadelphia. In 1985, he was involved in the decision to proceed with the raid and bombing of the MOVE organization, a radical group that had established a headquarters on Osage Avenue. The fire that resulted from the use of an improvised incendiary device killed 11 people – including five children – and destroyed 53 buildings, most of them owned by African American families.

Brig. Gen. Leo Brooks Sr.'s sons – Leo Brooks, Jr. and Vincent – also rose to the ranks of generals in the U.S. Army, with

Vincent retiring as a full general in 2019, and Leo Brooks, Jr. as a brigadier general. Brooks, Sr.'s nephew Mark Quander also achieved the rank of brigadier general. To date, the Brooks family is the only African American family to have a father and two sons rise to the rank of brigadier general or higher.

The Alexandria African American Hall of Fame's website features Brig. Gen. Leo A. Brooks, Sr. and other prominent graduates of Parker-Gray. You can find the website at: alexandriafricanamericanhalloffame.org/.

*Out of the Attic is
 provided by the Office of
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