

Wesley A. Brown

Born in 1927, Wesley Brown had a humble beginning being the son of two hard working parents. Brown would grow up and graduate from the prestigious Dunbar High School in 1944 where he was Cadet Corps Battalion Commander during his senior year. Due to World War 2 still going on he would quickly enlist into the Army reserves. After the war's end, he attended Howard University for a brief stint before being nominated and appointed to the Naval Academy by his Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity brother, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Junior. Brown would be the sixth African-American to attend the Naval Academy, the first five unfortunately didn't make it to graduation. Brown stated that he felt that it had to do with hazing, "I believe that those who preceded me were as well qualified academically as any of their classmens, but the hazing was to an extent unbearable, it kept you from studying and sleeping." Brown would graduate on June 3, 1949, becoming the first African-American to graduate from the United States Naval Academy. After graduation he served as a civil engineering officer and participated in many Navy construction projects such as homes, roads, and nuclear power plants. He retired from the Navy in 1969 after 20 years of service. In 2008 the Naval Academy honored Brown by naming their athletic fieldhouse after him. Wesley Brown passed away on May 22, 2012. Brown paved a way for African-Americans who came behind him to succeed. Today marks the 73rd anniversary in which he successfully broke the color barrier of the United States Naval Academy.