

## New Haven Stories - David Smith

Photo and Story by Tony Carosella

David Smith was brought into this world with the help of Doc Benny, or more formally known as Dr. Eisenmann. Years later David's wife, Joyce, would become Doc Benny's head nurse. David's parents had moved to New Haven before he was born and lived in the house at 601 Olive Street. When David was old enough for school, he went to Booker T. Washington School on Olive Street. Back then, schools were segregated, so the black students went to all black schools. David and his brother were part of the last graduating class from Booker T. Washington School and from there went to Sumner High School in St. Louis, and then schools integrated and he came back to New Haven. David went into the Marines and got his GED while in the Marine Corp. David worked for Hawthorne for a while making tents and he also married Joyce and started a family. As his family was growing, he went to tech school and also worked for Lou Fusz Automotive. He was recruited to go to the Fischer Body training school and then became one of the trainers and transferred to St. Louis. David became a Body Instructor in St. Louis and Charlotte. He then started working for the Chevy Division as a field engineer. David supervised the training for a five state region and worked there until the training centers closed in 2000. He then retired and has been doing fine art blacksmithing and has demonstrated his craft at most of the New Haven FireFests. He also loves horseback riding and did a little bit of riding at Henderson stables. He and Joyce had their share of health concerns and, unfortunately, Joyce, passed away a couple of years ago. Since then, David has become a historian and has gathered fascinating information on some of his ancestors who fought for the Union in the Civil War, and another relative who played professional baseball in the Negro leagues. This Thursday at the Scenic Regional Library New Haven Branch, you have a chance to hear a fascinating story from David as he lectures on February 6 about New Haven's Black History for Black History Month.

