



**Wilmer R. Cooksey, Jr.**  
**Class 28A-67**

Mr. Cooksey was a Distinguished Military Graduate of his OCS Class. He served in Vietnam with 1st Battalion, 40th Artillery as a Forward Observer and Battery Executive Officer and was the recipient of the Bronze Star. After release from active duty, he earned a master's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Toledo and completed postgraduate work in mechanical engineering at Michigan State.

His career in the automotive industry is the epitome of achievement. He began his career with General Motors as an assistant professor in industrial engineering at General Motors Institute in Flint, Michigan. He went on to hold leadership positions at GM plants in St. Louis, Atlanta and Fairfax, Kansas, before being named Corvette Plant Manager in February 1993. At that time, the Corvette was suffering from poor quality and low customer satisfaction.

When he retired in March 2008, the Corvette had achieved the highest quality and customer satisfaction ever experienced. As the first African-American in the position and the man who held it the longest, he brought a life-long love of Corvette to what he considered to be his "dream job." He worked with the United Auto Workers Union and listened to customers to make the Corvette exceed the expectations of all who ever dreamed of owning one.

Mr. Cooksey has received numerous automotive and engineering awards. He continues to serve his community as a member of several organizations and boards, was inducted into the Corvette Museum Hall of Fame and released his autobiography entitled "*No Time to Cry*" in 2013.