



# MISSION CHAMPIONS



## Dr. Joseph A. (Doc) Mason

August 1914 - March 1979

Director of the United States Dependents Schools, European Area (USDESEA)

Doc's guiding philosophy was to encourage each school to develop its own personality and for school administrators to "nourish creativity in their teaching staffs."

Dr. Joseph A. Mason, known as 'Doc' throughout the overseas schools, was Superintendent of Schools in Skokie/Niles, Illinois, when selected as Director of 7135th School Group, USAFE Headquarters, Wiesbaden, Germany in July 1956. The 7135th School Group was responsible for Air Force Dependents Schools, K-12, in Europe, Scandinavia, and the Middle East. He served until 1963.

From 1963 to 1965, he served as Chief Education Advisor to AID in Uganda. Doc Mason returned to Europe as Director of the United States Dependents Schools, European Area (USDESEA) as an executive appointee, serving on the staff of the United States Army, Europe (USAREUR) Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER). He was responsible for Army, Navy, and Air Force Dependents Schools in Europe and surrounding countries, a position he held until his death in March 1979.

One of Doc's first tasks was to merge the three systems (Army, Navy, and Air Force) under a single manager. Within two years, the system grew to 226 schools with 3,300 civilian educators and 103,000 students, at that time the tenth largest American school system. By 1967, he had standardized the curriculum and book ordering procedures for all schools regardless of which military service provided the host facility.

Among the achievements Doc Mason is remembered for are:

- Implementation of Project Bold, an Outward-Bound Program;
- Establishment of a Drug Education Program;
- Implementation of a system-wide minority studies program;
- Implementation of a doctoral program with the University of Southern California;
- Creation of a sponsorship program for teachers arriving from the US.

### Sources:

*American Overseas Schools Historical Society* by Dr. Tom Drysdale  
*Passports and Pedagogy* by Allen Dale Olson

