

**A life-size bronze statue, presented by AFA's Montgomery Chapter, honors the late Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force.**

# The Kisling Memorial

**A** LIFE-SIZE bronze statue of CMSAF Richard D. Kisling now stands in the lobby of Kisling Hall at the Air Force Senior Non-commissioned Officer Academy at the Gunter Annex of Maxwell AFB, Ala. Chief Kisling died in 1985 of Lou Gehrig's disease. Kisling Hall, the central building at the Academy, was named in his honor in 1986. The statue was donated to the Air Force by the Montgomery (Ala.) Chapter of the Air Force Association, which conducted a fifteen-month fundraising campaign to make the memorial possible.

The Chief's wife, Alene Kisling, and his daughters, Kathy Durant and Karen Apple, were present for the dedication ceremony December 13, as were all ten of the other NCOs who have worn the special stripes of Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force since the position was created in 1967. Also present were AFA Chairman of the Board James M. McCoy—himself a former Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force—and AFA National President Gene Smith.

The statue was sculpted by John Lajba of Omaha, Neb., who also did the statue of Gen. James H. Doolittle in the AFA headquarters building in Arlington, Va. Gen. Billy J. Boles, commander of Air Education and Training Command, accepted the statue on behalf of the Air Force from AFA officials.

Chief Kisling was the third Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, serving from 1971 to 1973. Before coming to that post, he had spent



*Roy A. Boudreaux, former Senior Enlisted Advisor to Air University and current member of AFA's Finance Committee, James M. McCoy, former AFA national president and current chairman of the board, Alene Kisling, and Gene Smith, current national president, gather around the statue of Chief Kisling in Kisling Hall at the Senior NCO Academy at Maxwell AFB's Gunter Annex, Ala.*

most of his career in personnel. He had also been a recruiter, a first sergeant, and a sergeant major. He is credited as being the driving force behind the creation, in 1973, of the Air Force Senior NCO Academy.

He always demonstrated a special feeling for people and their problems, perhaps partly because he grew up during the Depression as one of ten children in a farm family in western Iowa. Their mother died at the peak of the Depression.

In a feature article in 1972, *Air Force Magazine* called Chief Kisling "The GI's Man in Washington." That designation stuck and was recalled in press reports when the statue was dedicated. Alene Kisling added a line that described the Chief even better. "He was the nicest man I ever met," she said. ■