

Broadfoot, Carrie Early ^[1]

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13 Jun 1870 - 8 Jan 1945

Carrie Early Broadfoot was a pioneer in the development of nursing in North Carolina. She was a founder of the North Carolina Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NCACGN) and served as its first president.

Carrie Early Broadfoot was born on June 13, 1870 in Lynchburg, Virginia. She was educated at Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital in Philadelphia, graduating in 1899. She was Superintendent there from 1900-1904 and moved to Raleigh in fall 1904 or winter 1905. There, she became the Superintendent of St. Agnes Hospital School of Nursing which had been established in Raleigh in 1896 for the African American community. She joined the Red Cross and planned to go overseas during World War I. Instead she was directed to work at home to help control the influenza epidemic sweeping the country at the time.

In 1920, she and four other North Carolina African American nurses attended a meeting of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses in Washington, DC. In 1923, these five nurses founded the North Carolina Colored Graduate Nurses Association (later renamed the North Carolina Association of Negro Registered Nurses). Broadfoot served as its president for the first eight years. This professional organization continued until 1949 when it merged with the North Carolina Nurses Association. In 1923, North Carolina opened a Negro Division of the State Sanatorium for tuberculosis patients and Broadfoot served of the Nursing Superintendent of the African American division of the Sanatorium as well as Director of its African American nursing school. She directed this Division until 1944, when a stroke forced her to move in with her sister in Roxbury, MA.

Upon her "leave of absence" from the State sanatorium, the Board of Directors passed the following resolution (from the June, 1944 issue of the Sanatorium Sun, p.2)

"The Board of Directors of the North Carolina Sanatorium learns with deep regret of the sickness of Mrs. Carrie E. Broadfoot and desires to express their earnest wish for her speedy and complete recovery. For twenty years, Mrs. Broadfoot has been the Superintendent of Nurses of the Negro Division of the North Carolina Sanatorium and she has labored unceasingly and oftentimes at the expense of her health for the welfare of the institution. We were exceedingly fortunate in securing her services in the organization of the North Carolina Sanatorium Training School for Negro Nurses, the second Tuberculosis Training School in the United States. Her outstanding ability, splendid character and lofty ideals and her prestige as organizer of the Negro State Nurses Association of North Carolina in 1923 and as president for the first eight years and as recording secretary of the National Association of Negro Nurses have done much in establishing the Sanatorium and the Training School in the confidence of the Negroes over the State and in getting them to take advantage of the facilities offered for the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis.

Be it resolved That the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Sanatorium express their appreciation for the outstanding services Mrs. Broadfoot has rendered the institution and the cause of tuberculosis in the state."

Despite the esteem she received from co-workers and other nurses, she showed some weariness caused by establishing and building an organization in the face of racism, lack of money and lack of other institutional support. On April 2, 1934 she wrote a letter to Lula West, President of the White NCSNA saying:

"I have been President [of the NCACGN] for 9 years, long enough for the Association to incorporate and with a few hundred dollars in the treasury, and so I do feel that I did accomplish something for the good of the Association. Of course, in organizing the Association and being its President for 9 years was not smooth sailing and no doubt I made errors."

Carrie Broadfoot passed away on January 8, 1945 and was buried in Fayetteville's Elmwood Cemetery. In 2016 she was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the North Carolina Nurses Association. She was married to Thomas Broadfoot (1855-1933).

References:

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