

Mclver, Lula Verlinda Martin ^[1]

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by Elisabeth Bowles, 1991

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An 1895 photograph of Lula Verlinda Martin Mclver. Image from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Digital Collections.

^[2]Lula Verlinda Martin Mclver, educator and wife of the founder of the [University of North Carolina at Greensboro](#) ^[3], was born in Salem, the daughter of Dr. Samuel Martin, a physician and dentist whose office was a block from [Salem Academy](#) ^[4]. Her mother, Verlinda Miller Martin, was an honor graduate of Edgeworth Seminary in [Greensboro](#) ^[5]. The family moved to Missouri when she was two and she received her early education at home. Feeling deprived, however, at age eight—at her request—she entered public school and was placed in the fourth grade. She returned to North Carolina in 1875 and was graduated from Salem Academy in 1881. She then conducted her own one-room school, worked at the Oxford Orphanage, and taught at the Winston Graded School.

At the Winston school she met [Charles Duncan Mclver](#) ^[6] in 1884. In the same year they both attended the summer normal school at [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[7]. They were married in 1885. Considering a wedding ring a badge of slavery, she refused ever to wear one.

Having been thwarted in her desire to study medicine because of her sex, Lula Mclver joined her husband in his crusade to provide higher education for women. When [Charles Mclver](#) ^[6] and [Edwin A. Alderman](#) ^[8] were appointed to direct the teachers' institutes, she stayed in [Raleigh](#) ^[9] to teach at [Peace Institute](#) ^[10]. When she was free, however, she often accompanied Charles as he traveled around the state. She cleaned up the courthouses in which classes were held and frequently assisted him with the teaching.

On leaving Peace Institute, Mrs. Mclver became "lady principal" of Charlotte Female Institute. While in [Charlotte](#) ^[11], she studied medicine with Dr. [Annie Laurie Alexander](#) ^[12], the state's first practicing woman physician.

The Mclvers moved to Greensboro in 1892, when he became the first president of the State Normal and Industrial School. Mrs. Mclver entertained visitors to the campus and participated in civic organizations. She served on the board of directors of the [YMCA](#) ^[13] and with her husband founded the Woman's Association for the Betterment of Public School Houses. The purpose of the latter group was to improve the appearance of classrooms and grounds and to campaign for regular and compulsory school medical examinations.

After her husband's death in 1906, Mrs. Mclver continued to live in their residence on the Greensboro campus until her death. The Mclvers were the parents of four children: Annie Martin, [Charles D., Jr.](#) ^[14], Verlinda Millie, and [Lula Martin](#) ^[15].



A photograph of Lula Verlinda Martin Mclver, circa 1921. Image from Archive.org.

[16]References:

Elisabeth A. Bowles, *A Good Beginning* (1967).

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Additional Resources:

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"Mclver Family." Photograph. Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ui/id/6404> [18] (accessed June 13, 2013).

Lathrop, Virginia Terrell. 1940. *Mrs. Charles Duncan Mclver : Founder's Day, 1940*. [19] Greensboro, N.C.: North Carolina College for Women.

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Alderman Studio. "Lula Martin Mclver." Photograph. Greensboro, N.C. 1895. Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ui/id/6407> [2] (accessed June 13, 2013).

"Mrs. Chas. D. Mclver." Photograph. *Pine needles [serial]*. Greensboro, N.C.: Senior Class, North Carolina College for Women. 1920. 6. <https://archive.org/stream/pinneedlesseria00nort#page/6/mode/2up> [16] (accessed June 13, 2013).

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