

A smile of sweet understanding

fellow Negroes to forget about politics and a college education and to learn how to be better farmers and artisans. Cooper also favored industrial training; yet she found herself far more closely aligned with the black scholar and author W.E.B. DuBois who advocated classical instruction for his race. "The object was black survival," says Hutchinson, noting that Cooper and others felt that, without the academic programs, there would be little hope of getting black students into college and ultimately the professions. "These students, then, would become the bootstraps by which the entire race would be uplifted," Hutchinson concludes.

Cooper became principal of M Street in 1902, but by the 1904-05 term she was at odds with the white-dominated board, which insisted on the vocational approach, believing, Hutchinson writes, that blacks were "mentally inferior" and that such an approach was therefore "appropriate." The angered board charged that under Cooper's direction school standards had slipped and that the faculty was neglecting student discipline. All the while, however, M Street students for the first time were being admitted—many with scholarships—to Harvard, Brown and other Ivy League colleges.

In 1906, the board fired Cooper.

Writing of her dismissal, she said: "The dominant forces of our country are not yet tolerant of the higher steps for colored youth."

Cooper's background and principles also put her squarely in the middle of the emerging black women's club movement. The clubs grew among women dissatisfied with being cast aside as "colored" units of white clubs and angered by racial intolerance throughout American society, even among religious groups. Cooper believed "the struggle for human rights might be waged more effectively with the perspective and balance of intelligent black women," Hutchinson says. Always one to back polemics with action, Cooper became a delegate to the First National Conference of Afro-American Women in Boston in 1895.

A quarter century later, Cooper, now in her 60s and back in the D.C. school system, took time off from teaching to continue her lifelong quest for education, this time pursuing a doctorate at the Sorbonne in Paris. Ironically, the former slave girl's dissertation, written in French, explored the Gallic nation's attitude toward slavery.

In 1930, when she was about 72, Cooper at last retires, but soon she was again involved in an effort to broaden the educational horizons of black people, now as president of

Frelinghuysen University, a black institution in the nation's capital.

The university, established to educate poor, working class blacks from the South, had no real campus of its own and met in homes and other makeshift educational centers.

But the school's morale and very life was threatened when the D.C. Board of Education terminated its right to confer degrees, thrusting Cooper into yet another battle over the issue of educational opportunity for blacks. Rejecting the concept that the school could effectively continue as a non-degree-conferring institution, she appealed for reconsideration, writing the superintendent of schools: "I am unwilling to preside at a farce."

She lost the battle, and she suffered another blow when her niece and namesake, whom she had hoped would carry on the vital work, died in 1939.

Anna Cooper lived for another quarter century, quietly but without losing her life's philosophy. A few years before she died in 1964, she wrote how she wished to be remembered:

No flowers please, just a smile of sweet understanding
The knowing look that sees beyond and says gently and kindly
Somebody's teacher on Vacation now—Resting for the Fall Opening.



Ella Phillips Stewart

One of the outstanding women to enter the field of pharmacy is *Ella Phillips Stewart*. Born in Virginia in 1893, the daughter of sharecropper parents, she distinguished herself academically by winning five major scholarships to Storer College in W. Va. In 1916, she graduated from Pittsburgh University of Pharmacy, the first black to do so, and was the first black woman to pass the Pennsylvania State Board of Pharmacy.

Stewart worked as a pharmacist at a hospital until the end of World War I.

After her marriage to a fellow pharmacist in 1920, they moved to Toledo, Ohio, where they purchased a building that had their drugstore on the ground floor, and living quarters above. There, for 23 years, they served the community with total involvement in all areas: political, social, and professional. Ella Stewart has been an author; goodwill ambassador for the U.S. Department of State; Chairwoman for many important committees and organizations including the NACW; and board member for numerous organizations on the national, state, and local level. She has received numerous awards including having an elementary school named after her. Finally, still active, she is the oldest living black woman pharmacist in the U.S. It would appear that she has done all that she set out to do; and more.

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