

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Bette Catoe

PERSON

Catoe, Bette, 1926-

Alternative Names: Dr. Bette Catoe;

Life Dates: April 7, 1926-February 1, 2022

Place of Birth: Washington, District of Columbia, USA

Residence: Washington, D.C.

Occupations: Pediatrician

Biographical Note

Pediatrician Dr. Bette Catoe Strudwick was born on April 7, 1926, in Washington, D.C. Her mother was a White House pastry chef and government worker and her father was a taxicab owner and driver. Catoe's parents divorced when she was a young child, at which point her mother gained custody and raised her in Washington, D.C. She was educated in Washington, D.C., public schools and received her high school diploma from Dunbar High School in 1944.

Catoe received a full academic scholarship from Howard University, where she earned her B.S. degree in chemistry and physics in 1948. Her career ambition was to become a nurse or lab technician until she received a scholarship to Howard University's Medical School. While a medical school student, she pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and married her husband, Dr. Warren Strudwick. She was one of only seven women in her graduating class when she received her M.D. degree in 1951. In 1956, she began practicing pediatrics in the basement of her home, allowing her to work full time and raise her three children. In 1958, she helped to integrate Washington, D.C. hospitals. She moved her home-based medical practice into a downtown Washington office. By 1971, she had seen thousands of children and continued to provide medical assistance until she retired in 2003. In 1966, Catoe was elected as an at-large member of the Board of Trustees of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, a post she served in for over thirty years. Ten years later, she was elected as a delegate to the 1976 National Democratic Convention in New York. Catoe also served on and was Chairperson of the D.C. Commission on Judicial Disabilities and Tenure for more than a decade. Catoe was involved in a number of civic organizations, including the AKA Sorority, Jack and Jill of America, the NAACP, the Urban League, The Links, and Carrousel. Catoe and her husband, Dr. Warren Strudwick, had three children; two are physicians and the other is an attorney.

Dr. Bette Catoe Strudwick was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 17, 2004.

Catoe passed away on February 1, 2022, at the age of 95.

Related Entries

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Thomas P. Morgan Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Howard University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Howard University College of Medicine [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

M.D.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member

Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member