

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Rachel Keith

PERSON

Keith, Rachel Hannah
Celestine, 1924-2007

Alternative Names: Dr. Rachel Keith; Rachel Boone
Keith; ; Dr. Rachel B. Keith

Life Dates: May 30, 1924-January 4, 2007

Place of Birth: Monrovia, Liberia

Residence: Detroit, Michigan

Work: Detroit, Michigan

Occupations: Physician

Biographical Note

Detroit physician Rachel B. Keith was born Rachel Hannah Celestine Boone on May 30, 1924, in Monrovia, Liberia; her parents, Reverends Clinton C. and Rachel Tharps Boone, were Baptist medical missionaries. Keith's grandfather, Reverend Lemuel

Washington Boone, was a founding trustee of Shaw University. Keith came to the United States at age three and began her schooling at Richmond, Virginia's Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School; she graduated from Armstrong High School in 1938, at age thirteen. That same year, Keith lost her mother and moved in with her aunt, Dr. Bessie B. Tharps, in Rhode Island. Keith graduated second in her class from Houghton College in upstate New York in 1943; she completed her medical degree at Boston University School of Medicine in 1949.

In 1949, Keith was featured in The Boston Globe for achieving the highest score to that date on a medical school test. One-time president of the Blackwell Society, Keith was also featured in Look Magazine's 1949 story about Boston University's home medical service. After completing her internship at Harlem Hospital, Keith served at Brooklyn's Coney Island Hospital before moving to Detroit in 1951. Keith completed a two-year residency in internal medicine at Detroit Receiving Hospital in 1953; in 1954, she joined the staff at Detroit Memorial Hospital and entered private practice with Dr. Thomas Batchelor in Conant Gardens. Keith's hospital affiliations included Burton Mercy Hospital and Sinai Hospital; she was also a member of the Wayne County Medical Society, Michigan State Medical Society, American Medical Association, Detroit Medical Society, Detroit Gastroenterological Society, and the National Medical Association.

Active in the NAACP and the Links, Keith held memberships in the American Leprosy Mission; the Detroit Science Center; and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Keith also served on the Michigan Board of Medicine from 1986 to 1993. Keith and her husband, Judge Damon Keith, raised three daughters.

Keith passed away on Thursday, January 4, 2007.

Related Entries

James H. Blackwell School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Houghton College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Brown University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Armstrong High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Boston University School of Medicine [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Harlem Hospital Center [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Intern

Detroit Receiving Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Resident

Coney Island Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Resident

Herman Kiefer Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Detroit Memorial Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Doctor

Blackwell Society [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

President

National Medical Association [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member