

HISTORIC MARKER PROGRAM

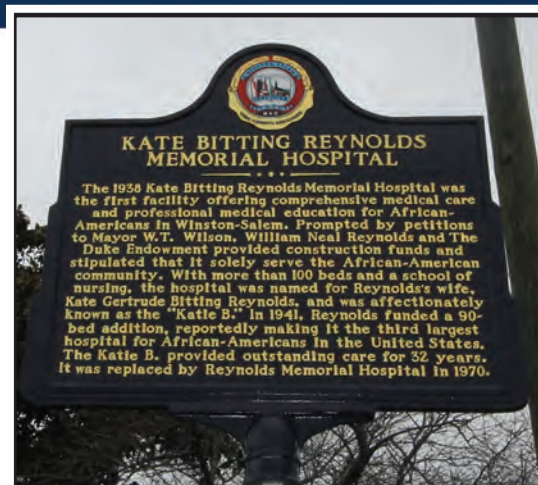
Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Kate Bitting Reynolds Memorial Hospital

N. Cleveland Avenue & E. Seventh Street

Constructed in 1938, the Kate Bitting Reynolds Memorial Hospital, affectionately called the “Katie B,” was the first publicly-operated facility to treat only African-American patients in Winston-Salem and provided African-American residents the opportunity to receive modern, high quality healthcare. Its significance to the history of medicine and African-American education in the city is evident in the annual reunion of its former employees and students.

Before construction of the “Katie B,” African-American patients were housed and treated in the north wing of City Memorial Hospital, which was created in 1913 after Winston and Salem merged. Though this was the only large-scale medical facility for African-American patients at the time, the wing held only 60 beds. In addition to having such limited access to treatment, no African-American patients were allowed to be treated by African-American physicians. In fact, African-American physicians were prohibited from treating patients in City Memorial Hospital altogether.



In 1936, officers of the Twin City Medical Society (the African-American physicians' organization) approached Mayor W. T. Wilson, demanding opportunities for the African -American physicians to apply their professions. After numerous petitions, the Hospital Commission and the Board of Alderman agreed to construct a hospital where African-American physicians could treat patients.



The Duke Endowment Fund and William Neal Reynolds, donated money to begin construction of the hospital. The hospital was named for William's wife, Kate Bitting Reynolds. Instructions were given to the City to "...use these funds for no other purpose than the erection and equipment of a hospital for colored people in Winston Salem."

When the hospital was completed, it held 100 medical beds, included a three-year nursing school, and held multiple accreditations. Doctors, dentists, dietitians, and pharmacists all utilized the space for the treatment of African-American patients. However, the facility was operated by the City and administered by white physicians, which was a cause for discontent among its predominately African-American staff.

Eventually, it was determined that the site still did not adequately meet the needs of the community which it served. As a result, Reynolds commissioned an addition to the facility in 1940, adding 90 beds and making it the third largest hospital for African-Americans in the United States

at the time. He also laid out conditions that specifically called for opportunities for African-American physicians and interns to improve their medical skill by being allowed to take more responsibility in the operation of the hospital. Administrative control of the hospital was handed over to African-American physicians in 1946, from which point the hospital continued to provide quality care until the opening of Reynolds Memorial Hospital in 1970. That hospital eventually replaced the "Katie B," becoming Reynolds Health Center and serving patients of every race through the 1990s. When the Downtown Health Plaza opened, Reynolds Health Center stopped serving patients and now operates as the offices of the Forsyth County Department of Social Services. Kate Bitting Reynolds Memorial Hospital was demolished in 1973.



This information is also available
at the Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's web site:
<http://www.ForsythCountyHRC.org>