



COVER STORY

Two Inseparable and Undisputed Northeast Georgia Legends

By Dr. Walter Allen

I want to believe that the renowned writer, Sam Walter Foss (1858-1911) had in mind people like Dr. Donarell R. Green, Jr., and his family when he wrote the eloquent poem titled "The House by the Side of the Road" for they lived in a house by the side of the road at 680 West Hancock Avenue in Athens. And to paraphrase Homer "they were friends to man" and made lasting contributions in providing health care for the Athens and Northeast Georgia African American community. They were in essence our neighbors.

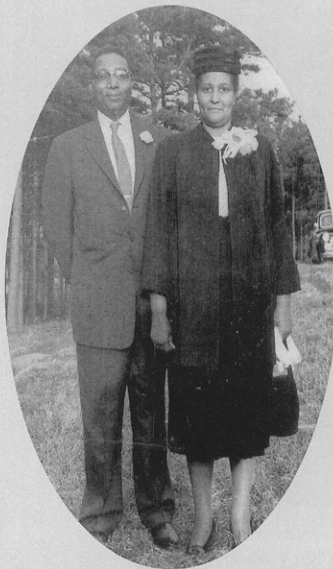
Dr. Green, Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia on December 22, 1908. His father was already a practicing physician at his birth and his mother managed the home. He often talked about how his parents encouraged and nurtured him throughout his childhood and adolescence years and instilled in him the motivation to achieve.

After graduating from the former Atlanta University High School with top honors, Dr. Green, Jr. enrolled at Talladega College in Alabama and majored in Pre-Medical Studies. It was at Talladega College where he met the lovely and charming Marian Kathleen from Long Island, New York. In 1935 she became his bride.

Dr. Green graduated from Talladega and Mrs. Green eventually transferred to and graduated from Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia. Both the Greens had a passion for learning and taught school in Americus, Georgia for some years. Although they enjoyed teaching and helping young people, Donarell Jr. still had a dream to pursue. He wanted to follow in the footsteps of his father and become a physician. The elder Dr. Green, Sr. had always encouraged him to attend Howard University, his Alma Mater, but the young Donarell desired to attend and

was accepted into medical school at Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tennessee.

After graduating from Meharry in 1942, during World War II, Dr. Green was appointed to the rank of a military officer and served as a medical doctor



In 1957, Dr. Donarell Green Jr. became the first black doctor to serve on the staff at St. Mary's Hospital. This historic photo was taken outside the Hill Chapel Baptist Church who honored his appointment.

in the South Pacific caring for wounded soldiers. His military rank as an officer was indeed a rarity during that period of time for few African Americans had attained such a position.

In 1946, following his military service and honorable discharge, Dr. Green and his wife moved to Athens to join the growing practice of another well-known African American physi-

cian, Dr. Jones. During that time, there were disparities in access to health care by African Americans and the poor. Dr. Green's relocation here was a Godsend and helped increase the community's access to health care.

By the time of Dr. Green's arrival in Athens, Dr. Jones had built the Susan Medical Center (named for Dr. Jones' mother) on Hancock Avenue. Later on, following Dr. Jones departure from Athens, Dr. Green purchased the Susan Medical Center and practiced medicine out of it for many, many years. In honor of his memory and that of Mrs. Green, the building stands today as the Law Office (Green & Green Associates) for their twin grandsons, Fredrell and Donarell, IV.

As a practicing physician for more than 40 years, Dr. Green also made house calls and could be seen throughout the neighborhoods with his black bag going to deliver a baby or to see about the elderly and home bound. The family's residence was never closed to anyone sick. Sometimes Dr. Green received payment for his services and sometimes he did not. What is so memorable is that whether or not he was paid for his services, the fact never really seemed to disturb him to any great extent. He just went about providing men, women and children the medical care needed at the time. Dr. Green put the Hippocratic Oath into practice and amassing a fortune from his medical services was apparently not on his life's agenda.

As Dr. Green's practice grew, so did his family. He and Mrs. Green became the proud parents of six children: Kayrell, Harriet Elizabeth, Donarell, III, Washington (deceased), Wilucia and Marjorie. Three of the children continue to reside in Athens. Two of them live in "the house by the side of the road."

It was in 1953, after leaving Korea, that I had the opportunity to meet the Greens. Professor Homer T. Edwards,

Principal, had hired me for the band director's position at the then Athens High and Industrial School. I was experiencing many physical problems after leaving combat duty in Korea and was fortunate to have come in contact with Doctor and Mrs. Green. He treated and attended to me physically, and both of them became advocates of my emotional health. I soon found them to be refreshing, interesting and caring friends. Dr. Green and I even conducted a research project during the 1950s studying the attitudes that a sample of selected Black women in Athens had toward receiving medical care from Black doctors.

The Greens were also among the first of this area's community activists. When integration of schools was being paid lip service by some, they took bold steps during the early 1960s by enrolling Wilucia into the all white high school and later on enrolled their youngest child, Marjorie. Those two students became the first and among the first there after to integrate the Clarke County School District.

While Dr. Green worked tirelessly in sort of a quiet manner to keep the community healthy, Mrs. Green was perhaps more outspoken and did not hesitate one second in sharing her views on the issues of that time period, no matter

how sensitive or dangerous was the societal climate. She could be counted on to speak for the community when others could or would not do so.

The Athens and Northeast Georgia community is a better place today because of the contributions made by Doctor and Mrs. Green. I think of them often since their passing in 1980 and 1988 respectively. They certainly touched my life and that of countless others. I will forever be thankful that our paths crossed.

They are unsung heroes and legends of their time.



The Susan Medical Center opened its doors in 1946 to provide the black residents of Northeast Georgia with its first maternity hospital. Dr. Andrew Jones (fourth from right), built the hospital with donations he and others collected locally and from around the country. The center was named for Dr. Jones's mother, Susan Jones. After Dr. Jones's death in 1952, the hospital was purchased by Dr. D. R. Green who continued to operate the facility as a hospital until 1964. From 1964 until his death in 1980, Dr. Green used the building as a medical office. The Susan Building now houses the law firm of Green & Green, the grandsons of Dr. Donarell R. Green Jr. The law firm of Thurmond, Thurmond, Miller and Rucker carefully restored the building in the late 70's and city historian Mike Thurmond also retained many original photographs and documents like this one that chronicles its history as an important part of the black community.

GG
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Susan Nowell (Right) with mother Pinkie Thrasher. Susan was the first person born at the Susan Medical Center in 1947.