

MEDIA BUSINESS SOLUTIONS PRESENTS
The African American Registry®



National Association of
Colored Graduate Nurses
founded!

August 25

On this date in 1908, the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) was founded. Martha Minerva Franklin founded the groundbreaking association.



This was an organization dedicated to promoting the standards and welfare of Black nurses and breaking down racial discrimination in the profession. This organization served an important need, as Black nurses at that time were not welcome in the American Nurses Association (ANA). The main purpose of the NACGN was to win integration of Black RNs into nursing schools, nursing jobs, and nursing organizations. In the early years, membership was low and the major achievement was the development of a registry of Black nurses.

Then, in 1934, Estelle Massey Riddle Osborne (who, three years earlier, had become the first black person to obtain a master's degree in nursing) was elected president of NACGN. Her top priority was the hiring of the group's first paid executive director, and the person she chose was Mabel K. Staupers. For 12 consecutive years, Osborne and Staupers attended each ANA House of Delegates meeting, lobbying for complete integration of Black nurses into their professional association. RNs had to be a member of a State Nurses Association, such as NYSNA, to belong to ANA. But 16 southern states and Washington, D.C. didn't allow Black members.

They traveled throughout the country, drumming up new members and support for the NACGN's goals among conventional nursing groups, other Black organizations, and the Black press. They were phenomenally successful. In 1933, the NACGN had only 175 members; by 1949, that number had grown to 947. One of their greatest achievements was their successful lobbying for an integrated Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II. This, in turn, produced a snowball effect; by the end of the war, all but a few state nurses associations admitted Blacks as members. Shortly after the war, the ANA suggested that it take over the functions of the NACGN "and that its program be expanded for the complete integration of Negro nurses."

The ANA also agreed to continue awarding the Mary Mahoney Medal to the person or group contributing the most to inter-group relations. The NACGN had created that award in 1936, named for the nation's first Black graduate nurse. So, in 1951, the NACGN did something rare in the

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history of bureaucracies: it declared victory and voted itself out of business and its members voted to merge with the American Nurses Association.

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