



Franklyn Duffy

April 21, 2010

Obituary for Dr. Franklyn Verlett Duffy

Franklyn Verlett Duffy was born on March 27, 1918, in Toledo, Ohio in the family home at 1115 Woodland Avenue. He departed this life on Wednesday, April 21, 2010 at Mount Carmel West Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio. Frank was the eighth of nine children born to Joseph Vandora Duffy and Mamie Orr Duffy.

Frank was a graduate of Toledo Libby high school and enrolled at West Virginia State College in Institute, West Virginia where he met his wife Helen Louise Jones who was also a student there. He would often remark over the years of their 62 year marriage that he fell in love with her the moment he saw her. He had a keen interest in agricultural studies and transferred to Michigan State University because of their fine and well respected department of agriculture, but upon requesting a dormitory room, he was denied housing because of his race. His parents and then Senator Charles Diggs along with the Detroit NAACP protested and challenged this discriminatory practice and Frank Duffy became the first “negro” student to live in a dormitory at Michigan State.

Frank and Helen settled in Raleigh, North Carolina where Frank worked with

farmers to improve their agricultural skills using soil and crop rotation and new methods of farming for more efficient use of the land. Frank was then called to serve in the US Navy during World War II. He then enrolled in the College of Dentistry at the Ohio State University, graduating in 1956 as a Doctor of Dental Surgery. He and Helen decided to settle in Toledo where Frank had grown up. As a practicing dentist, Frank was dismayed and appalled by the large number of children he was treating with decaying teeth. As the Director of the Dental Health Division of the Toledo Health Department, he initiated a ten-year study to confirm and validate that the use of fluoride in the city water system would significantly reduce tooth decay in children. The results of the study proved this to be true and his research was recognized nation-wide as a truly viable way to stop the epidemic of tooth decay in young children. Fluoridation began in Toledo in April, 1966.

In 2008, Dr. Duffy was celebrated as an honoree at the African American Legacy Project as a person who used his intellect to provide better health for everyone. He was embraced by the Toledo community as a legend providing inspiration and motivation for those who follow in his footsteps. This recognition was one of his proudest moments.

Frank's beloved wife Helen, his parents, Mamie and Joseph, his six sisters, Kathlyne, Laura, Hazel, Lillian, Mamie, and Ethel, and his brother Joseph have all preceded him in death. He leaves to mourn his passing one brother, Walter Duffy, his 4 children, Kathy Espy (Atty. Ben), Atty. Frank Duffy, Jr. (Rosanna), Eugene Duffy (Norrene), and Dr. Rosemary Duffy-Cooper (Dr. Robert), his 6 granddaughters, Elizabeth Espy, Dr. Amy Espy-Smith (David), Laura Espy-Bell (Stephen), Atty . Lynne Espy, Josie Duffy, Rosa Duffy and his grandson, Joshua Duffy-Cooper. Carrying his legacy are his great-granddaughters, Nina, Lelia, Brooklynne, and Avery Smith, Kendall Bell, and Brynn Espy. Also mourning his passing are lifelong friends, Dr. John (Joan) Coleman and family and special grandmom, Dr. Josie Johnson and many

cousins, nieces and nephews of the Duffy, Kyser and Marshall families of Toledo and California. A kind and gentle man, Dr. Duffy will be very much missed by all and always remembered.

Dr. Duffy was a proud member of All Saints Episcopal Church for nearly 75 years, the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Sigma Pi Phi (Boule) Fraternity, and NAACP (life member.)

Services for Dr. Duffy will be held on Saturday, April 24, at All Saints Episcopal Church, 563 Pinewood Avenue. Visitation 9 am to 11 am and service at 11 am. A reception for family and friends will be held in the parish hall of the church following interment at Ottawa Hills Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to All Saints Episcopal Church 563 Pinewood Avenue Toledo, Ohio 43604 or The African American Legacy Project 2321 Upton Avenue Toledo, Ohio 43606