



- *Businesswoman*
- *Philanthropist*

Ruth Hartley Mosley

1886–1975

Inducted 1994

Ruth Price was born in Savannah in 1886, just a few years after the Age of Reconstruction. Her father was a bootmaker, proud of his craft, and he gave her a legacy of independence and self-support, and determination to serve her people in Georgia, shunning some inviting opportunities in other places.

With her father's support, she attained a high school education in Savannah, and then turned to one of the few careers that offered educated black women an opportunity in those days. She attended a seminar for nurse's training in Concord, North Carolina, and completed her clinical training at Providence Hospital in Chicago. She was a person of commanding presence, tall, with a beautiful but very serious face and penetrating eyes. She had the look of a natural leader.

Returning to Georgia, she found a job at the Georgia State Sanitarium in Milledgeville. There, in 1910, at the age of 24, she was appointed head nurse of the "Colored Females Department" at the hospital, the first black woman to achieve such rank. In those days of primitive psycho-therapy, when a mental hospital was little more than a human storehouse, we can be sure that she saw human need at its most basic and elemental. We can also be reasonably sure that her role in treating patients was more important than that of the scant number of doctors who had little time to treat indigent patients.

In 1917, she married Richard Hartley, a businessman of Macon. Probably at her urging, he sold the saloon he owned and bought an interest in a funeral home. Ruth Hartley went back into training and became a licensed mortician. She made a success of the business while also serving as a nurse with the health Department and with the Bibb County Schools.

During this time, she also began to invest money in real estate and other ventures. Following the death of Richard Hartley in 1931, she continued to invest and build her fortune. Six years later she married Fisher Mosley of New York City.

Ruth Hartley Mosley rose to social prominence in

Macon. She traveled widely, took speech lessons, and developed a speaking style as masterful as her appearance. She lived in a beautiful home on Spring Street in Macon's Historic District. It was near Steward Chapel AME Church, which she served for many years as a trustee and treasurer. From the beginning, she was part of the Civil Rights movement. She planned and took part in sit-ins in downtown Macon and was a leader in

"... To make loans to student nurses who need such funds to complete their training."

– From Ruth Hartley Mosley's will

Macon's NAACP. She was a founding board member of the Booker T. Washington Community Center.

When she died in 1975 at age 89, her estate included two large trust funds. The first established the Ruth

Hartley Mosley Memorial Fund and is a loan-fund for needy students who want to become nurses or other providers of health care. The other established the Ruth Hartley Mosley Memorial Women's Center, located in her home on Spring Street.

She was one who achieved striking success against heavy odds, and her success was not merely in personal gain but in service to the neediest people.

Additional Resources

Ruth Hartley Mosley Women's Center

Macon, GA 31204

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