

YWCA HIGHLIGHTS

by

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Founded 1906--in an old Patton House--as an organization to help women and girls. It was later a joint organization of all women, a prayer group, and a home for nurses but for all women regardless of their "status in life."

When the Patton House became too small, the Cherokee Inn on Woodfin and Oak Streets was purchased. It became too expensive to operate so was sold. The residence of Mrs. Charles M. Platt on Merrimon Ave. was used until the YWCA was built at 13 Grove St. in 1924.

The Phyllis Wheatley Branch for Negro women began with a group of women who met for programs on Sunday afternoons in 1913 and 1914. A building on Market St. was bought and later turned over to the government during World War I. After the war, the building was returned and later sold. The meetings were held in a building on the site of the Phyllis Wheatley Center on College St.

A new building was erected on this site in 1938 and the older Center was used as a residence for girls and for classes and club meetings. The new building was the only fully equipped gymnasium for Negroes in the city and in much of the South. It later became the center of community activities--clubs, parties, teas. Co-ed and educational functions were held at the Phyllis Wheatley Center.

In 1934, the Central YW on Grove St. was given \$100,000 through the will of Samuel Moorehead whose only child, Mrs. Charles S. Bryant, was a Grove St. board member. With these funds an elegant boarding house was completed. For 36 years it served many working girls and students called this home and place for classes and other activities.

Phyllis Wheatley building near the tunnel on College St had to be sold to make room for progress so "Y" activities were moved to an old green building on Ashland Ave. while a new building was being hoped for and finally built at 185 South French Broad Ave.

For approximately 50 years there were 2 Y's--2 buildings, 2 boards, 2 membership lists, 2 budgets, 2 sets of committees, 2 sets of classes, 2 summer day camps, 2 annual meetings, 2 of everything.

National YW celebrated many years of teen work, beginning as "Little Ladies" clubs, then Girl Reserves, and then Y-teens, which expanded to National Teen Organization.

The purpose of the Y grew and by 1967 was open to all women and girls regardless of religion and all who had the potention to better their lot in life. In examining racism in YW structure--two wage scales, tracking minorities into traditional jobs, Asheville had made some moves--an interracial dinner in 1946, election of a Black woman to the Board of Directors in 1954, a joint Public Affairs committee, and a Black executive Director was hired.

Work began in earnest toward one association with one budget.



Because Asheville's Y moved at a steady pace, our leadership was sought after by other Y's and the National YWCA looked to Asheville more and more for leadership.

We are now trying to pay off the mortgage on our beautiful swimming pool and gym even as we face enormous repairs on our older and newer buildings and grounds. We can think of no more appreciated gift than the commitment to continue working for the YW to see it through good and bad times so it can go on to even greater leadership roles.