

## Lula Belle Stewart-Robinson, MD



**Lula Belle Stewart-Robinson, MD; (1920-1965)** Born in Jackson, MS, A graduate of Alcorn College. She attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, TN. and graduated with her MD in 1944. She completed her internship at Flint Goodridge Hospital at Dillard University in New Orleans.

She practiced medicine in her hometown of Jackson, Mississippi and later returned to Meharry Medical College to specialize in pediatric medicine where she received a certification 1947 and certified in cardiology at Cook County Children's Hospital in Chicago.

Lula Belle was assigned to the Delta area of Mississippi where malaria, venereal disease, malnutrition, and birth defects were causing widespread cataclysmic illness to the African American children in the rural Mississippi farmlands and plantations.

During the years 1945-49 she focused her commitment to the struggle for the human dignity of African Americans living in Mississippi. To this end, she organized the first National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) youth organization in the state of Mississippi. In 1952 she received a graduate's degree in pediatrics from University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

She married Phil in 1953 and moved to Detroit to establish her career as a trailblazing figure in medicine, recognized as the first African American woman to become a pediatric cardiologist in Michigan. Her career focused on providing accessible and equitable quality healthcare.

**Hospital Affiliations:** Dr. Stewart-Robinson was on staff at several Detroit hospitals, including Children's Hospital, Harper Hospital, Grace Hospital, Crittenton Maternity Hospital, and Detroit Memorial Hospital. She became the Director of the cardio-vascular laboratory at Children's Hospital of Michigan and a clinical instructor at Wayne State University.

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She performed numerous life saving cardiac surgeries on children that would otherwise not have access to a hospital & surgical resources or a surgeon to perform the operations. She also provided aftercare at her medical center.

She operated a medical practice in the family home and along with Phil and other physicians owned and operated a full service medical office on Detroit's west side called the Linwood Medical Center in 1960. The practice provided healthcare to families in the community regardless of their ability to pay during a time when Black people faced significant discrimination in the healthcare system.

Above all, Lula Belle was an amazing wife and devoted mother of 3 children. She typically managed her day so that she could see them off to school every morning and typically scheduled to see patients at her home office in the afternoon when they returned home giving the kids the impression that she was always at home.

Lula Belle was a true humanitarian and was quoted as saying that her philosophy has been *"to be to the patient the mother they would be if they were there."* Her office door was never closed to patients who could not pay. Dr. Stewart stated, *"I feel that medicine when sincerely practiced is the greatest humanitarian contribution one can make."*

In 1964 Lula Belle was diagnosed with Leukemia that was very aggressive. She passed away on November 5th, 1965. leaving a lasting legacy in the community that continues to echo across the nation thru the many lives that she saved, others she inspired and the social services agency that was founded in her name ; The Lula Belle Stewart Center Inc. (1972-2007).