

Anna DeCosta Banks

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Anna DeCosta Banks, RN, was a pioneer in the nursing profession. Mrs. Banks was the first head nurse at the Hospital and Training School for Nurses, which existed at that time at 153 Cannon Street in Charleston, South Carolina. It was an integrated school that served all classes and races.

Anna DeCosta was born on September 4, 1869, in Charleston, South Carolina, during the Reconstruction Era. She was the daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth DeCosta. She was educated in the Charleston Public Schools and graduated from Hampton Institute in Virginia in 1891. Miss DeCosta then enrolled in Hampton's Dixie Hospital of Nursing. She was in its first graduating class and served in 1895 as head nurse at this hospital training school. Having returned to Charleston, South Carolina, she desired to fulfill her dream at the Hospital and Training School for Nurses. This hospital was organized for the purpose of training black nurses with a hospital of their own. After working as head nurse, she subsequently became Superintendent of Nurses, serving for 32 years.

Nurse Banks' daughter, Evangeline Banks Harrison, stated that she seldom saw her mother out of uniform. She said, "Under my mother's guidance many young women were trained as nurses. She and Dr. McClennan and student nurses somehow managed to care for the large number of Negro patients. Charges to each patient covered only the cost of board and medicine." Mrs. Harrison further stated, "Through the years friends and organizations donated food and small financial contributions. The hospital experienced many lean years. Through prayers and perseverance it survived for 62 years serving Charleston and the surrounding area."

When a new hospital was constructed at 25 Courtney Drive on the west side of Charleston, the name of the Hospital and Training School for Nurses was changed to McClennan-Banks Hospital. Dr. Alonzo McClennon had founded the original hospital in 1897. The McClennon-Banks Hospital closed in 1977.

During her life, Anna DeCosta Banks was employed for 24 years as a visiting nurse by the Ladies Benevolent Society of Charleston. Nurse Banks died on November 29, 1930. The members of the Benevolent Society paid her the following tribute, "All ages, classes, races called her blessed." For her service to the State of South Carolina a wing of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) is named in her honor.



JANUARY



2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				New Year's Day 1 Emancipation Proclamation issued in 1863.	2 William Lloyd Garrison began publishing "The Liberator," an abolitionist newspaper, in 1831.	3 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. was elected chairperson of the House Committee on Education and Labor in 1961.
4 Grace Bumbry, opera singer, was born, in 1937.	5 George Washington Carver died in 1943.	6 The World Anti-Slavery Convention opened in London, 1831. John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie, famed musician, died, 1993.	7 Marian Anderson made her debut in the Metropolitan Opera House in 1955.	8 Fannie M. Jackson, educator and first African-American woman college graduate in the US, was born, 1836. Butterfly McQueen, actress, born in 1911.	9 Fisk University established in 1866.	10 Southern Christian Leadership Conference founded in 1957.
11 Charles W. Anderson becomes first African-American member of the Kentucky Legislature, 1936.	12 The Congressional Black Caucus organized in 1971.	13 Don Barksdale became first African-American person to play in an NBA All-Star Game in 1953.	14 John Oliver Killens, novelist, was born, 1916.	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in 1929.	16 Jefferson Franklin Long took oath of office as first African-American Congressman from Georgia, 1871.	17 Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) born in 1942.
18 Robert C. Weaver became first African-American presidential cabinet member in 1966.	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Observed) 19 Freed Blacks organized Savanna GA's first Baptist church, 1788.	20 Barbara Jordan, congresswoman, was born in 1936.	21 William Brown-Chappell, pioneer aviator, born, 1906.	22 Nat Turner, leader of the Virginia slave revolt, born, 1800.	23 Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, pioneer in surgery, founded Provident Hospital in Chicago, IL, in 1889.	24 Coach Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines won record 800th college basketball game in 1990.
25 Sojourner Truth addressed the first Black Women's Rights Convention, 1851.	26 Bessie Coleman, first African-American woman aviator, born, 1893. Angela Davis, activist, born, 1944.	27 Leontyne Price, world renowned opera singer, made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera House, 1961.	28 Ronald McNair, astronaut, died in Challenger explosion in 1986.	29 Oprah Winfrey, entertainer, born in 1954.	30 William Wells Brown, novelist and dramatist, published first Black drama, "Leap to Freedom," 1858.	31 Jackie Robinson, first African-American baseball player in the major leagues was born in 1919.