

Distinguished Achievement Citation

Willa B. Player

Class of 1929

For eleven years, Willa Player served as President of Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina. Her appointment to the College's top leadership position was culmination of twenty-five year tenure there, where she began as instructor of French and Latin and moved through the ranks of escalating administrative responsibilities. During her Presidency, Bennett College developed several important innovative experimental programs, including Saturday classes for academically talented high school students.

In 1966, Dr. Player accepted a White House appointment as Director of the U.S. Office of Education's Division of College Support which supervises grants designed to strengthen small, developing colleges. She continued in this position until her retirement in 1978.

In 1962, she was the first woman to serve as President of the National Association of Schools and colleges of the Methodist Church and subsequently, the first black woman to serve as Trustee of Ohio Wesleyan.

Dr. Player has a master's degree from Oberlin College, a Doctor of Education degree from Columbia University and honorary degrees from Ohio Wesleyan, Lycoming, Morehouse and Albion Colleges. She has done graduate studies at the Universities of Chicago, Wisconsin and Grenoble, France. In 1965, she delivered the commencement address at Ohio Wesleyan.

Widely traveled in Europe and Africa, Dr. Player is the author of many articles and periodicals.

Now retired, she lives in Akron. Through significant achievements in distinguished careers in education and government, Willa Player has enhanced the reputation of her sex, her race, and her Alma Mater.

June 21, 1980

