The Life & Times of Don Speed Smith Goodloe – 1878-1959

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The Life and Times of Don Speed Smith Goodloe
by Steve Buckingham, President, Goodloe Congregation

This morning, we are celebrating the birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a true hero of the American Civil Rights Movement. It is fitting that we, as Americans, honor Dr. King because he symbolizes the continuing effort to extend the rights and privileges of our nation to all of its residents. It is fitting that we, as Unitarian Universalists, honor Dr. King because his voice and actions, grounded in the values of black Christian churches, promoted society's recognition of one of our fundamental UU principles: respect for the worth and dignity of every person.

But Dr. King was not the first leader in the Civil Rights Movement, nor (thank goodness) will he be the last. From the birth of our nation to the present day, many others have worked to eradicate the abomination of slavery, to uplift those victimized by oppression and racism, and to provide the same opportunities for life, growth, education, work and validation that wealthy, straight, male, Anglo Americans have enjoyed all along. Furthermore, many African Americans provided leadership within the black community from colonial times through the difficult times of slavery and the underground railway, emancipation and reconstruction, segregation and Jim Crow, marches and demonstrations, "benign neglect" and riots, affirmative action and anti-busing violence. Many of these leaders are unheralded, quietly serving the community and the nation with their actions and their personal example.

So it is fitting that we recognize today one of these leaders, one we can claim as a fellow Unitarian. Don Speed Smith Goodloe was a leader at a time that was very different than that experienced by Dr. King. Let's take a look at our society in Goodloe's day. What are the differences and the similarities? In what kind of community did he grow up? What would others have expected of him? How could he make a difference in his world?

Don Goodloe was born in 1878, 13 years after the end of the Civil War, in Kentucky, a border state – a slave state, like Maryland, that did not secede from the Union. Although he also lived for a time in Tennessee and Pennsylvania, he spent most of his life in two border states, ending up in Maryland. Emancipation of the slaves and disenfranchisement of white rebels led to a brief period of Republican supremacy in Southern states, supported by blacks who held many high public offices. However, the end of Northern occupation and the so-called Reconstruction era resulted in a white

backlash that drove blacks from office, reasserted the Democratic Party's dominance, and led to the enactment of Jim Crow laws – laws that severely restricted the rights of African Americans to vote and enforced strict policies of racial segregation. Meanwhile Kentucky and Maryland both had integrated schools that only became segregated later due to white fears of black domination. Maryland Law School admitted blacks, including one who later became a City Councilman in 1890, but later closed to Negroes.[1] Berea College in Kentucky was an integrated school that Goodloe attended before it became segregated in 1904.

According to the book *Maryland, a Middle Temperament* by Robert J. Brugger, Maryland in those days was a "peculiar place . . . [that] neither progressed as quickly as Massachusetts, Wisconsin, or Kansas in social-reform legislation in this period nor set upon blacks with the finality of states in the ex-Confederate South. To the north and west, labor unions, heavy concentrations of urban dwellers, or farmers opposed to the unfairness of corporate giants like railroads all combined to produce a political awakening. Below Maryland, whites feared the dominance of black voters, whose recent dalliance with Populism had led to a conservative backlash. Some southern states tried "grandfather" clauses and poll taxes to keep blacks out of politics; the Virginia constitution of 1902 restricted voting to persons who could understand portions of the charter when an official read it to them."[2]

While Maryland lawmakers did pass a "Jim Crow" law in 1904 requiring segregation in public facilities, their attempts to disenfranchise blacks, including one based on Virginia's constitution, were defeated three different times by the voters.[3] However, the General Assembly did pass a law that eliminated all reference to political party on the ballot and prohibited parties from posting any campaign literature that identified candidates except by written word. "Placing illiterate citizens in the dark, [this] device applied only to counties of large black population or traditional Republican strength – Garrett, Frederick, Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's on the Western shore; Kent, Talbot, Somerset, and Worcester on the Eastern Shore."[4] During this time, Maryland blacks were articulate and well-organized to oppose these efforts, some organizing a Negro Suffrage League with chapters throughout the state, while local blacks personally boycotted the Worcester County delegate who sponsored the Jim Crow bill – he returned home to find no black would work for him.[5]

"Maryland blacks, by making progress of their own, had labored to avoid such attacks [on their franchise]. Schools remained a primary concern to black leaders in the years following passage of the Fifteenth Amendment [granting blacks the right to vote]. The Maryland Progressive State Colored Teachers Association organized in 1886 and aimed to bring about change on the local level. . . . The Mutual Brotherhood of Liberty pleaded with some success for more black schools in [Baltimore] city. Between 1867

[1] Robert J. Brugger, Maryland, A Middle Temperament, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1988, p. 420
[2] *Ibid*, p. 418.
[3] *Ibid.,* p. 424.
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 421.
[5] *Ibid.,* p. 422.

and 1900 their number rose from ten to twenty-seven, and black enrollment from about nine hundred to more than ninety-three hundred pupils."[6]

"Outside Baltimore, black education varied from meager to disappointing. A law the assembly passed at Governor Oden Bowie's urging in 1872 obligated Maryland counties to maintain separate but supposedly equal white and black schools. Depending on revenues, the state in the late nineteenth century provided about $400,000 for white schools ($1.69 per pupil) and about a quarter of that amount for Negroes. County commissioners spent the state money and little more on black pupils. In 1895 seven counties [including Anne Arundel and Prince George's] made no contributions to Negro schools from county funds. . . . No Maryland county had a black high school, and Negro higher education received scant encouragement. . . .Maryland's official stinginess cost many black young people by scaling down their dreams. At the elementary school level it produced black illiteracy figures which, if lower than in states to the south, were far higher than for Maryland whites. In 1890 more than one-third of black Baltimoreans over the age of ten were illiterate. A state survey in 1900 disclosed that 47 percent (26,616) of all registered blacks could not read or write, as compared to 8 percent (18,307) of white voters."[7]

Another complaint, and one that Don Goodloe was dedicated to addressing, was the small number of black teachers in the separate "colored" school system, at one point representing only 35 of 210 teachers employed. "Officials thus slighted two local sources – the Baltimore Normal School for Colored Teachers, . . .and the Methodist ministerial institute, which after 1890 called itself Morgan College" and is now Morgan State University.[8] It was the Baltimore Normal School that relocated to Prince George's County and became the institution that Don Goodloe led as its Principal.

The Path To Bowie State

by Barbara Morris

The Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday is a time when we think not only of King himself, but also of the Civil Rights Movement in general and all of the individuals besides King, over a longer period of time, who were instruments of change - the kind of change that promotes *the inherent worth and dignity of every person* and *justice, equity and compassion in human relations.* Therefore, it is a fitting time to look at our congregation's recent decision to change our name to Goodloe Memorial Unitarian Universalist Congregation and to learn more about Don Speed Smith Goodloe, how he was an instrument for change, and how his life relates to some of our Unitarian Universalist principles. Some of us know only that he was the first African-American graduate of our Unitarian seminary – Meadville Theological School – in 1906, and the founding principal of Bowie State University.

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[6] *Ibid.,* p. 418.
[7] *Ibid.,* pp. 419-420.
[8] *Ibid.,* p. 419.

As with Dr. Martin Luther King, Don Goodloe's support for integration is a good example of our principal regarding *the inherent worth and dignity of every person* and *justice, equity and compassion in human relations.* As Dr. King strove for integration of intrastate transportation by organizing the Montgomery bus boycott, and worked for integration of schools and the workplace, Goodloe participated in integrated educational institutions, as best he could in the time in which he lived.

He was born in Lowell, Kentucky in 1878, and first attended a segregated normal school for the training of black teachers–Knoxville College in Knoxville, Tennessee. Here he met his future wife, Fannie Carey, of Knoxville, who graduated from the college. Knoxville, founded in 1875 as a normal school for training of black teachers, was designated a college in 1877. It offered classics, science, theology, agriculture, industrial arts, and medicine, as well as industrial training on the model of Hampton Institute, Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, and later, Bowie Normal School. Students at Knoxville cut timber and helped construct most buildings on campus and made a million bricks.

After studying at Knoxville, and until 1899, Goodloe attended Berea College, a racially integrated school in Berea, Kentucky. This college was founded in 1855 by Presbyterian abolitionist John G. Fee who believed that God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth. The school claims to have been the only racially integrated college in the South up until 1904, when Kentucky passed a law that required all its schools to be segregated. Berea also is the alma mater of our own Roxie Wickline and her brother, Lee.

Goodloe and Fannie were married in Knoxville in June, 1899, and moved to Greenville, Tennessee, near Nashville, where Goodloe began his career as a teacher and principal at Greenville College, a black normal school. Goodloe's desire to teach fellow African-Americans is also consistent with our Unitarian Universalist belief in *the inherent worth and dignity of every person* and *justice, equity and compassion in human relations*.

The Goodloes remained in Greenville from 1899 until 1903, and started their family there. Fannie gave birth to sons Don B. and Wallis.

In 1904, they moved to Meadville, Pennsylvania, for Goodloe to complete his Bachelor of Arts degree at Allegheny College. He was also attracted to the Unitarian seminary there, Meadville Theological School, which was founded in 1844, and later became Meadville / Lombard Theological School in Chicago, which is affiliated with the University of Chicago and the Unitarian Universalist Association. In Meadville, with two boys, and Fannie pregnant with daughter Carey, Goodloe was quick to find work to help support them. Then he enrolled at both Allegheny College and Meadville Theological School.

Goodloe was the second black enrolled in Meadville, and the first to graduate from the school. Others followed, and Goodloe can be said to have integrated the school.

Although he did not encounter the angry resistance of George Wallace standing in the schoolhouse doorway, he likely encountered racial prejudice from some students and faculty. He was, in the words of Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, "a Black Pioneer in a White Denomination."

Goodloe's enrollment at Meadville also represents *a free and responsible search for truth and meaning*. In a 1903 letter Meadville president Franklin Southworth states that Goodloe was a "residing elder in the M.E. church" and that although "the way was open for him at two or three orthodox institutions in the South and the money would have been provided...he could not bring himself to accept the doctrinal limitations, so he applied to us. I endeavored before advising him to come here simply to find out what his ambition was, and it seemed to me that to satisfy that ambition it was necessary for him to choose a school like ours rather than a sectarian school."

He came to Meadville even though he knew it was unlikely he would be ordained by a Unitarian church because none would accept a black minister. President Southworth wrote, "I find this morning in putting the possibilities squarely before him that he has come here with his eyes open, knowing that it is probably not a good way into the orthodox ministry, but ready to take the consequences."

Southworth continued, "What the negroes need *in...*[Goodloe's] *judgement* more than emotionalism in religion and more even than industrialism in education, is moral teaching and preaching." Goodloe's desire to provide moral teaching to his students rather than emotionalism in religion is reminiscent of Thomas Jefferson, who in *The Jefferson Bible, The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, provided the story of Jesus's life and his moral teachings without additional commentary or interpretation from other people of the time and after. Goodloe "proposes," said Southworth, "with the help of his wife, to start a small school composed of carefully selected and choice students, and to run the school along with his Sunday preaching." This certainly is an example of *encouragement to spiritual growth* in his students as Unitarian Universalists provide in our congregations.

After graduating from both Allegheny College and Meadville Theological School in 1906, Goodloe resumed his career as a teacher at Danville (Kentucky) Industrial Normal School and as a businessman in Danville – from 1906 until 1910. His desire to be in business probably demonstrates not only a need to do well for his family, but also shows the ambition and entrepreneurial drive that led Goodloe to achieve and to organize his environment. These attributes may have been critical to his success in the development and growth of Bowie Normal School.

In 1910, the Goodloes left Danville, and Don became vice-principal at Manassas Industrial School in Manassas, Virginia, for a year. Then he responded to the opportunity to build a new school near Baltimore and Washington, Maryland Normal and Industrial School at Bowie for the Training of Colored Youth, also known as Maryland State Normal School No. 3.

1911 and After
by Richard Morris

When the Goodloes arrived at the school it had a farmhouse, barn, chicken house, and a new brick building constructed by the State in 1910 where they lived with the female students. Male students were housed in the loft of the barn, previously used for horses and cows.

According to his son Wallis, Goodloe was a persuasive speaker. His writing skills are demonstrated in his school catalogs and reports. The 1911-1912 school catalog espouses a philosophy in harmony with that of Booker T. Washington. Goodloe states that "now and perhaps for many years to come agricultural and industrial training are plainly indicated for the negro by the situation itself...[It is important to teach] the negro boy and girl to love and live successfully the agricultural life..." The Maryland legislature was controlled by farmers in rural counties who were short on labor and feared that education would draw blacks away from the farm. The catalog emphasized the importance of teaching skills to black students–carpentry, painting, blacksmithing, plastering, papering and shoemaking, and the women domestic science, sewing and millinery work. The school also aimed to prepare negro teachers. The academic curriculum was equal to the ordinary high school course, with English, arithmetic, algebra, history, geography, music, government, physics, botany, and Latin or German. There were six teachers. Mrs. Goodloe taught music.

In 1911, the school enrolled 58 students: 23 preparatory, 22 first year, 6 second year, and 7 third year. Incoming students had to be at least 15 years old and to have completed "six grades in the best public schools of that state." Thus, for most of Goodloe's tenure, the school was the only place in the state for black students to receive an education past the sixth grade level. The first black high school in the state was started in Cambridge in 1917, followed by one in Baltimore, then Annapolis.

During the first year, the black elementary school at the corner of 11th Street and Normal School Road was placed under the direction of the Normal School, thus giving teachers-in-training a model school for practice with 86 students. At that time, Maryland only provided primary school education to blacks.

In 1915, Goodloe was honored by inclusion in *Who's Who of the Colored Race*, which listed essential bibliographical information, including his membership in the Knights of Pythias, a secular fraternal order. Pythians promoted friendship, universal peace, kindness and tolerance, and had rituals based on Greek philosophy of 400 B.C. These principles seem consistent with today's Unitarian Universalism.

However, like most fraternal orders, the Pythians admitted no blacks. This led blacks to establish the African-American Knights of Pythias and parallel versions of other orders (e.g., Masons and Odd Fellows). In 1906, when the white fraternal orders attempted to force the black counterparts out of existence, the black Pythians, 300,000 strong nationally, raised money, sued the white Pythians, and litigated all the way to the

U.S. Supreme Court, which in 1912 ruled in their favor, agreeing that too much time had passed (40 years?) for the white order to retain exclusive use of its name and ritual. The case was the forerunner of NAACP lawsuits using the Supreme Court to overrule state courts, including *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

Also in 1915 the Goodloes decided to build a house for themselves. They hired John Moore, a black architect, and black workers built it. Lumber for the framing was cut, and bricks for the veneer, were made on the property. It was completed in 1916. In 1988, the Goodloe House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1916, Goodloe was included in *Who's Who in America*.

In 1917, household chemistry, farm physics, and practice school work were introduced. The terms *household* chemistry and *farm* physics may have been added to satisfy the farmers who controlled politics in Annapolis.

In the fall of 1918 student enrollment declined sharply to 36 students as a result of World War I, the national outbreak of influenza, and the high cost of living. In 1919, it bounced back up to 69 students, and faculty was increased from 7 to 10. Goodloe established the first summer session for the school in 1920.

In 1920, the secretary of the Maryland State Colored Teachers' Association sent Dr. D.S.S. Goodloe, a letter of commendation "for the constant and progressive fight he has made toward enriching of the curriculum and the uplifting of the standards of the Bowie State Normal School."

During his tenure in Bowie, from 1911 until 1921, Don Speed Smith Goodloe established a faculty of ten members, student enrollment of 80, an admission requirement of completion of seventh grade, a model school for student teachers at Horsepen Hill School–the first school for black children in Bowie–a summer session, a new dormitory for women, and renovation of living quarters for men. One additional year was added to the course, which led to a second grade certificate and the opportunity for students to do two year's additional work to earn a first grade certificate. He made many pleas for additional funding before the legislature in Annapolis, which might have brought more rapid development to the school, but the state seemed to favor the white normal schools in its appropriations.

Little is known about why Goodloe resigned his post at the age of 43 in 1921. Goodloe told a friend of his in Washington that he resigned because he was just tired of being principal. It is possible that he was tired of the inability to gain sufficient funding, to expand into more industrial training courses, and to upgrade the normal school to the standard curriculum used at Towson and Frostburg. Perhaps he was tired of dealing with the segregation, inequality and the continued racism of the times and wished to immerse himself in the black community. The Ku Klux Klan was reviving in the South. There were 64 lynchings in the U.S. in 1918 and 83 in 1919. There were at least fourteen in Maryland in the twenty years before Goodloe arrived and two during his tenure here. Black soldiers returning from the war met the brutal face of white supremacy. Race riots

in Chicago killed 38 people. Perhaps Goodloe gave up on Booker T. Washington's dream of gaining equality with whites through hard work and patience. Perhaps he acted too "white" for the powers in Annapolis.

Goodloe's liberal religion also may have been a cause of conflict at the school. His successor as Principal, Leonidas S. James, according to his daughter, considered it "very important to be guided by sound philosophy in an environment that was sprinkled with many Christian liberals." His daughter may have been referring to Goodloe.

After leaving the school, Goodloe moved to Baltimore, where a directory of black businesses listed him as President of Standard Benefit Society in 1923-24. Other records show him owning rental housing in Baltimore. Later he moved to Washington, and is said to have owned extensive property in the District. In 1924, he testified in Congress on behalf of a bill creating an inter-racial commission. Fannie and two of their sons, Wallis and Donald B. continued to live in the two-story house on Jericho Park Road. Both sons graduated from Howard university, became teachers in Baltimore, and later in Washington. Donald B. Goodloe taught at Dunbar High School where he taught Bill Byers, a member of our congregation. In 1949, at the age of 71, Goodloe divorced Fannie and remarried. He died in Washington, D.C. in 1959. Although we have no record of Goodloe's religious affiliation after Meadville, we do know that one of his sons, Donald B. Goodloe, was a teacher and active member at All-Souls who caught the train from Bowie to D.C. to attend service. This son lived in the Goodloe house in Bowie until his death.

Don Speed Smith Goodloe's enormous contributions to the building of Bowie State University will not be forgotten, and Goodloe Memorial Unitarian Universalist Congregation will remember him as one of the early Bowie Unitarians whose life as an educator was consistent with our belief in *the inherent worth and dignity of every person*, *justice, equity and compassion in human relations*, *a free and responsible search for truth and meaning,* and *acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth*.

The End