An African American Woman Mathematician:
Martha Euphemia Lofton Haynes

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Dr. Martha Euphemia Lofton Haynes is documented as the first African American woman to receive her Ph.D. in Mathematics in the United States. She received her Ph.D. from the Catholic University of America in 1943. The title of her thesis is “Determination of Sets of Independent Conditions Characterizing Certain Special Cases of Symmetric Correspondences.” Not only was Dr. Haynes well involved in the academic community, but she was also involved in many non-academic, community related activities. Dr. Haynes was a teacher, leader, philanthropist and mathematician. During her lifetime, Dr. Haynes has accomplished much and through her example, other women mathematicians can do the same.
Who was Dr. Martha Euphemia Lofton Haynes?
Martha Euphemia Lofton was born to Dr. William S. Lofton and Lavinia Day Lofton in 1890 in Washington D.C. Dr. Lofton was not only a widely known and esteemed dentist in the D.C. area, but he was also an investor in African American businesses in the area. Euphemia’s mother, Lavinia, was not just a member of the Catholic Church, but was a very active parishioner.

By 1917, Euphemia married a man by the name of Harold Appo Haynes. Harold A. Haynes was, at one point in time, a principal and a deputy superintendent in charge of Washington D.C.’s schools for African Americans.
Through hard work and discipline, Dr. Euphemia Haynes accomplished many academic goals:

- **1909:** Dr. Haynes graduated from Washington’s Miner Normal [High] School.
- **1914:** Dr. Haynes received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Smith College in psychology with coursework in mathematics.
- **1930:** Dr. Haynes received a Master’s degree in education from the University of Chicago.
- **1943:** Dr. Haynes was granted a Doctorate degree in mathematics from the Catholic University of America; with this achievement, Dr. Haynes was documented as the first African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in Mathematics. The title of her dissertation was “Determination of Sets of Independent Conditions Characterizing Certain Special Cases of Symmetric Correspondences.” Dr. Aubrey Landrey was her dissertation advisor.
For forty-seven years Dr. Haynes has taught in Washington D.C.’s public schools before retiring in 1959. She was also the first woman to be Chair to the DC School Board (1966-67). Other aspects of her career include:

• A first grade teacher at Garrison and Garfield Schools
• A math teacher at Armstrong High School
• An English teacher at Miner Normal School
• A professor of Mathematics at Miner’s Teachers College where she established a Mathematics Department
• A professor at the District of Columbia’s Teachers College where she also served as Chair of the Division of Mathematics and Business Education
• Occasionally taught part-time at Howard University
Dr. Haynes, besides establishing a prominent academic career, was an active community member. Here is a list of the various organizations that she was a part of during her lifetime:

- Served as first vice president of Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women at some point
- Served as chairman of Advisory Board of Fides Neighborhood House at some point
- Served on the Executive Committee of National Social Welfare Assembly at some point
- Served as secretary and a member of the Executive Committee of the DC Health and Welfare Council
- Served on the local and national committees of the United Service Organization
- National Conference of Christians and Jews, which is now called the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ)
Other organizations that Dr. Haynes participated in included:

- Catholic Interracial Council of Washington
- Urban League
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- League of Women Voters
- American Association of University Women (AAUW)
- Committee of International Social Welfare
Schools Figure Euphemia Haynes Dies
By Maureen Joyce Washington Post Staff Writer
The Washington Post (1974-Current file); Aug 1, 1980; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The Washington Post (1877 - 1991)
pg. B4

Dr. Euphemia Lofthus Haynes, 80, a former D.C. board of education president and member and a Washington educator for nearly 50 years, died Thursday at the Washington Hospital Center. She had been hospitalized since suffering a stroke July 18.

Dr. Haynes served as school board member from July 1956 to July 1967. A fourth-generation Washingtonian, she was a product of the same school system that she had helped shape.

She served as a member of the old one-member school board, then appointed by the court, and after winning her seat she served on the board before becoming its president.

During that time she was active in all areas of the school system, including desegregation and its "track system," which placed students in separate educational programs depending on ability.

The board, which had a history of the city's schools for a number of years and which was said to be "duped" by the white and black students, was abolished along with the desegregation by Judge Joseph R. McKee in June 1967, when Mrs. Haynes was board president.

Mrs. Haynes had helped civil rights leader Julius W. Robson's suit, charging the school system with racial and economic discrimination, which led to Judge Wright's decision.

This also was school board activism when the machinery for a continued collective bargaining rights for public school teachers was set up in March 1967. She left the board in 1959 when the city's elected school board took office.

Miss Haynes graduated from Borden College in 1914, entered a mission's degree in education from the University of Chicago and a master's in mathematics from Catholic University.

She taught mathematics in Washington high schools and, in 1961, established a mathematics department at old Miraleste Teachers College. She was professor and chairman of the department when she retired in 1959.

After retiring, Mrs. Haynes became active in Catholic organizations. She was president of the Washington Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women from 1964 to 1966. She also served on the board of Catholic Charities and as member of the D.C. branch of the National Council of Catholic Women.

In 1968, she received the Papal medal, "The Eucharist of Teachers," for service to the church and her community.

Her husband, Dr. Flavell A. Haynes, a former city superintendent of the city's public schools, died two years ago.

Mrs. Haynes leaves no immediate survivors.
References


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THANK YOU!
Dr. Haynes was a teacher during a time in this country when segregation was heavily practiced. It wasn’t until the late 1960’s that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of Alexander v. Holmes County Board Of Education that the desegregation process be no longer delayed:

“The obligation of every school district is to terminate dual school systems at once and to operate now and hereafter only unitary schools…These schools were in which no person is to be effectively excluded from any school because of race or color.”

Dr. Haynes was very active when it came to advocating for the rights of African American and poor students. While she served as DC’s School Board President, Dr. Haynes not only spoke out against the school system’s de facto structure of segregation (segregation stemming from existing neighborhood configurations or recent trends in demographics) and its “track system” (placed students in academic or vocational programs based on availability), she saw these two frameworks terminated due to the decision of Judge J. Skelly Wright in the Case of Hobson v. Hansen in July 1967.