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The Evening Star - February 29, 1964

Mrs. Anna Cooper, 105, Negro Educator, Dies

Mrs. Anna J. Cooper, a Washington educator and champion of Negro academic rights for more than a half a century, died Thursday in her sleep at the age of 105.

Mrs. Cooper became one of the first Negro women college graduates when she received a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College in 1884. Later she received an honorary master's degree from Oberlin and a doctorate from the Sorbonne in Paris.

She was the daughter of George Washington Haywood, a slave. In 1877 she married the Rev. George A. C. Cooper, an Episcopal minister, in Raleigh, N. C. After her husband's death two years later, she went north to college.

Taught High School

Mrs. Cooper came to Washington after graduation to teach at the old M Street High School, now Dunbar, which was then the only high school for Negroes in the District. She taught Latin at the school for many years and was principal from 1901 to 1906.

In the wake of Booker T. Washington's argument with the Government that Negroes should be prepared for college training as well as for manual labor, Mrs. Cooper persuaded Harvard, Yale and Brown Universities to consider her school's graduates for scholarships.

In 1925, the same year Mrs. Cooper completed work for a doctorate at the Sorbonne, she



MRS. ANNA J. COOPER

published, in French, "Le Peerinage de Charlemagne."

Headed University

In 1929 Mrs. Cooper became president of Frelinghuysen University, founded by Jesse Lawson in 1906 for Negroes who wanted to study while holding a regular job.

When the university became large enough to need a permanent site, Mrs. Cooper donated the use of her home at 201 T street N.W. The school remained in the Cooper residence until its closing three years ago.

When Mrs. Cooper celebrated her 100th birthday in August, 1958, she was honored at a reception by friends and by alumni and trustees of the university.