

DEDICATION AND UNVEILING OF THE  
DR. CHARLES RICHARD DREW MEMORIAL  
MARKER

Alamance County Historic Properties  
Commission

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Pat Bailey

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Dedication and Unveiling  
of the  
**DR. CHARLES RICHARD DREW  
MEMORIAL MARKER**

Alamance County, N.C.  
April 5, 1986



**CHARLES R. DREW, M.D.**  
1904 - 1950

**"There must always be the continuing struggle to make the increasing knowledge of the world bear some fruit in increased understanding and in the production of human happiness."**

**Charles Drew**

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County Office Building  
124 West Elm Street  
Graham, N. C. 27253

#### Marker

### **CHARLES RICHARD DREW 1904-1950**

Black Scientist and Surgeon  
Pioneer In The Preservation of Blood Plasma  
Medical Director of the Blood-For-Britain Project, 1940  
Director of the First American Red Cross Bank, 1941  
Teacher To A Generation of American Doctors,  
Freedmen's Hospital, Howard University, Washington, D. C.  
Outstanding Athlete, Amherst College & McGill University  
Member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity  
Steadfast Foe of Racial Injustice  
Died In Alamance General Hospital, 1 April, 1950,  
After An Automobile Accident At This Site

"There must always be the continuing struggle to make the increasing knowledge of the world bear some fruit in increased understanding and in the production of human happiness

—Charles R. Drew

# Biography

## CHARLES RICHARD DREW, M. D.

### 1904-1950

Dr. Drew was born in Washington, D. C. on June 3, 1904. He attended public schools in Washington, D. C., graduating from Dunbar High School in 1922. He received his A. B. degree from Amherst College in 1926. While at Amherst, his prowess in track and football won him the Annual Mossman Trophy as the athlete who brought the highest honor to his school. Dr. Drew received his M. D. degree from McGill University School of Medicine in 1933, and spent the following two years as intern, then resident in Montreal General Hospital. In 1935, Dr. Drew went to Howard University as an instructor in pathology, advancing quickly to assistant professor of surgery. Because of the great promise he showed, he received a Rockefeller Fellowship in 1938 for further study at Columbia University Medical Center.

While at Columbia, Dr. Drew completed a timely dissertation, "Blood Bank," for the doctor of science degree, a work that was so impressive that he was chosen as medical director of the Blood-for-Britain project in the fall of 1940. It was during this period of his life that Dr. Drew made his reputation as a pioneer in the preservation of blood plasma. He successfully directed the shipment of large supplies of plasma to England for the use of British soldiers on Battlefields in France. In the spring of 1941, Dr. Drew served as medical director of the first American Red Cross Blood Bank in this country, a pilot program in New York City that became the model for blood banks in the national American Red Cross blood collection program during World War II. In 1944, Dr. Drew received the Spingarn Medal of the NAACP for his work in both British and American blood plasma projects.

In April 1941, Dr. Drew returned to Howard University as professor and head of the Department of Surgery. Here he achieved further distinction, particularly in the training of qualified black surgeons for the teaching and practice of surgery. During his tenure as head of the Department of Surgery from 1941 to 1950, he guided the department to new heights and left a legacy and a tradition which is very much alive today.

On April 1, 1950, Dr. Drew died in the emergency room of Alamance General Hospital in Burlington, N. C. from severe injuries received in an auto accident. He had been promptly taken to the hospital where three local doctors worked for several hours to save his life. All efforts were in vain.

Howard University President Mordecai Johnson, speaking at Dr. Drew's funeral, said of him: "Here we have what rarely happens in history—a life which crowds into a handful of years significance so great that men will never be able to forget it."

The **Washington Post**, in an editorial that was entered into the Congressional Record by Hubert Humphrey, also commented on Dr. Drew upon his death, saying: "He will be missed . . . not alone by his race but by his whole profession and by men everywhere who value scientific devotion and integrity."

Prepared by Spencie Love

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Special appreciation to Spencie Love, a member of the Memorial Marker Steering Committee and a candidate for the Ph.D degree in American History at Duke University. She is currently working on a dissertation on Dr. Charles Drew and black health care during the era of segregation.

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Program Chairman . . . . . Dr. David Maynard  
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Dedication and Unveiling

**DR. CHARLES RICHARD DREW MEMORIAL MARKER**

April 5, 1986 — 2:00 P. M.

N. C. Highway 49 North, Haw River, N. C. 27253

Presiding	Marvin E. Yount, Jr., Administrator Alamance General Hospital 1946-1961 Alamance Memorial Hospital 1961-1986
Invocation	Paul Foster, Chaplain Tau Omega Chapter, Greensboro, N. C. Omega Psi Phi Fraternity
Introduction of Guests	Dr. Roy D. Moore Tau Omega Chapter and Drew Memorial Steering Committee
Musical Selection—"Battle Hymn of the Republic"	Alamance Chorale Composer: William Steffe—Arrangement By Peter J. Wilhousky
Welcome	Mrs. Gilberta J. Mitchell, Chairperson Drew Memorial Steering Committee
Remarks:	
County of Alamance	Leonard Alcon, Chairman Alamance County Commissioners
Alamance County Historic Properties Commission	Larry Alley, Chairman
Amherst College	Dr. Albert N. Whiting Alumnus, Amherst, '38 Former Chancellor, N. C. Central University
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity	John Wesley Patterson Basileus, Tau Omega Chapter and Drew Memorial Steering Committee
American Red Cross	Dr. Charles Orr Board of Governors, National American Red Cross
Alamance-Caswell Medical Society	Dr. Charles E. Kernodle, Jr. Surgeon, Retired
Musical Selection—"At The River"	Alamance Chorale Setting By Aaron Copland
Introduction of Speaker	Dr. C. Mason Quick, Fayetteville, N. C. Physician and Former Student of Drew
Speaker	Dr. Charles Watts, Durham, N. C. Surgeon and Former Student of Drew
Solo—"I Will Not Pass This Way Again"	Mrs. Pearl Lee Technical College of Alamance Haw River, N. C.
Unveiling of Marker	Mrs. Charlene Drew Jarvis Daughter of Dr. Drew Joseph Drew, Brother of Dr. Drew
Litany of Dedication:	
Dr. David Maynard	Omega Psi Phi Fraternity-Tau Omega Chapter
Larry Alley	Alamance County Historical Properties Commission
Audience	
Omega Hymn	Members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity

# LITANY OF DEDICATION

## April 5, 1986

OMEGA PSI PHI LEADER:

Almighty God, creator of this earth and of the many peoples on it, we gather here today to remember and pay tribute to one of your children, our brother, Dr. Charles Richard Drew. We thank you for the gift of life, and especially for his life, which ended after an accident at this site thirty-six years ago, on April 1, 1950.

PEOPLE:

We will always remember those who have gone before us, especially those who have lived and died in Your service, keeping faith in all humankind and working for the unity of all people.

COUNTY LEADER:

O God, we praise You and thank You for the fire that ignites our souls with the desire for knowledge and wisdom. All knowledge helps us lead richer lives, and through every difficult endeavor, we come to know you better. We especially thank You for the fire that ignited Charles Drew's soul, and for the knowledge about blood and healing he diligently pursued and found, thereby saving the lives of many people and making them whole again.

PEOPLE:

In gathering here today, we honor all human efforts to attain knowledge that it may be used to make people's lives better. In honoring Charles Drew, we inevitably honor the spirit of integrity, hard work, selflessness, and zealous purposefulness, for these were his qualities.

OMEGA LEADER:

O God, we thank You for the generosity and good faith that have made our efforts here today possible. We thank You for the land that has been donated for our purpose and for the stone that we pray will stand here always as a memorial to Charles Drew. We thank You for the gifts from the hearts and hands of many people, in this county and beyond, that we might stand here together and pay this tribute to a great American.

PEOPLE:

We ask You to bless this earth, and this stone marker, that they may be preserved for many years to come, in the same spirit that they were given and dedicated. We pray that this site, once a place of death, may become a place of life and healing, through Your grace.

COUNTY LEADER:

O God, the final healer of all wounds, whether spiritual or physical, we pray that You heal us and make us whole, as You taught Charles Drew to do as a surgeon and doctor. Our knowledge is imperfect: our hearts and minds require Your touch, that we may see truly, and love each other, living together as one people without strife and misunderstanding.

PEOPLE:

WE dedicate ourselves and our lives to Your service, O God. And we promise that in our lifetimes we will be faithful to the memory of your servant, Charles Richard Drew.

Prepared by Spencie Love

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### IN TRIBUTE

The Drew Memorial Marker Steering Committee invited the family and friends of Dr. Drew and interested participants to share their memories of him and their reactions to the memorial. Below are some of their responses:

"I have such fond memories of my brother. Our father died when I was very young—just thirteen—and Charlie became my father figure—my severest critic and my greatest booster . . . (He) took me to my first horse race, The Preakness at Pimlico and to my first Omega Psi Phi ball in Washington (D. C.) He was so handsome and I was so proud to be his 'date'.

"I never thought of Charlie as a great scientist, surgeon, or teacher . . . even though I knew he was all of those things . . . He was my friend, my confidant, my teacher, my mentor. He was simply my big brother and I loved him. I shall miss him forever."

Eva Drew Pennington, sister of Dr. Drew

"Drew attended an Amherst College very different from today's. Many people then were not ready for black stars in a white world, and he met with racial slurs both on and off the field. He remained in control, however, since he had already decided that any people would make more progress by 'doing and showing' than 'violent demonstration . . .'

"Drew was very popular with his classmates and had a natural dignity combined with good humor."

Kent W. Faerber  
Secretary for Alumni Relations and Development  
Amherst College, Mass.

"... when Drew graduated in 1933, he was regarded at McGill as a man of great promise. An early tragic death cut short his career at its height, but in spite of that his achievements exceeded even the promise he showed as a medical student.

"McGill University is proud to number amongst its graduates Charles Richard Drew and I personally am proud to have a small share in the tribute being paid to him by the Dr. Drew Memorial Marker Committee of Alamance County, North Carolina."

Edward H. Bensley, M. D.  
Emeritus Professor of Medicine, and former Vice Dean  
of the Medical Faculty, McGill University, Canada

"Permit me to congratulate you for establishing a permanent memorial to Dr. Charles Richard Drew. We were colleagues at Howard University from 1947 . . . until his untimely death in 1950 . . . I admired him as one of the great scientists of the time, and as one of the most distinguished professors at the University . . . This country can, even now, boast of many distinguished surgeons who were his students. His colleagues at Howard knew of his sterling qualities as a teacher, and we all admired him for his complete devotion to his responsibilities in this area."

John Hope Franklin, Ph. D., historian

"... we look at him as a trail blazer and a pioneer in the field of education . . . One cannot measure the contributions that he made in the educational effort at the Howard University College of Medicine. He caused us to dare to think big and raise our sights . . . to a level of excellence that we didn't dream we could achieve. We were still deeply embroiled in the problems of segregation in medicine in the United States and opportunities were opening up very slowly.

"Your decision to pay this tribute to a truly great American is a good one and will cause your community to be admired for its good sense and generosity as long as men remember him. A new generation has grown up and does not realize that many of the things that we take for granted were not available a few years ago. This generation needs to be reminded of Charles

Drew for I think his life is an inspirational story of how great achievements can be accomplished although great obstacles may appear and reappear."

Charles D. Watts, M. D., Durham, N. C.  
Surgeon and former student of Dr. Drew

"On behalf of the Department of Surgery, I express our congratulations to you for honoring this outstanding man."

LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., Professor and Chairman  
of the Department of Surgery,  
Howard University Medical School

"Thank you for your recent letter in reference to the establishment of a memorial marker as a tribute to my father. The family of Dr. Drew is indeed pleased that the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, local physicians, other health officials and representatives of community organizations have chosen to honor Dr. Drew in this way."

Charlene Drew Jarvis, daughter of Dr. Drew and  
Washington, D.C. Council member

"Please find attached my donation to this most worthwhile project . . . allow me to sincerely congratulate . . . the committee for the fine job . . . (it) is doing for the citizens of Alamance County."

J. B. Allen, Jr., Chief District Court Judge,  
Graham, N.C.

"I am enclosing a small contribution to assist the efforts to honor Dr. Charlie Drew. His works live on every day through the extensive blood donor programs in America. I think it is only fitting that we in Alamance County pay tribute to this great American."

James E. Long, N.C. Commissioner of Insurance,  
Raleigh, N.C.

"Thousands of times over every day in this nation, Charles Drew's contribution to health care is used to give the needed blood of life to surgery patients, to accident victims, to those with special health needs which require new blood.

"Many use that development right here in our own county each day without ever realizing the link of Dr. Drew and this county. It was a tragic link, as his death occurred as a result of that traffic accident on April 1, 1950. But it is a link to be remembered."

Don Bolden, Editor, *The Daily Times-News*,  
Burlington, N.C., January 19, 1986

Prepared by Spencie Love



# "APRIL 1, 1950"

Walter R. Johnson, MD  
St. Louis, Missouri

It was on a beautiful, starry, moonlit night on March 31, 1950, shortly after 12 midnight, that four congenial, happy physicians, Charles R. Drew, Samuel L. Bullock, Richard Ford, and myself, Walter R. Johnson, left Washington, DC, by car for Tuskegee, Alabama, to serve at the annual free medical clinic held at the John A. Andrews Hospital. These clinics served as a diagnostic and treatment center for the black, rural inhabitants of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Georgia. Many physicians came from the urban medical centers of Washington, DC; Mt. Bayou, Mississippi; Chicago, St. Louis; and New Orleans. Many professors and clinicians came from Emory University, the University of Alabama, St. Louis University, Washington University, and other major clinics of the South to assist in the examination, diagnosis, and treatment of the great volume of material that found its way to the John A. Andrews Hospital clinic. It was for this reason that Dr. Drew requested these colleagues to participate with him in such a humane endeavor.

It seemed logical to us to leave Washington, DC, on Friday night and drive to Atlanta, relax for a short period, and then proceed to Tuskegee, Alabama. The clinics were to begin on Monday, April 3, and continue through Saturday, April 8. In Dr. Bullock's Buick Road Master automobile we drove uneventfully through the Virginia countryside discussing a few personal and medical problems and anecdotes. As we neared the Virginia-North Carolina state line at about 5:30 a.m., we noticed a roadside doughnut shop. We decided to stop for doughnuts and coffee and take an opportunity to stretch. The break was refreshing and in a short while we were on our way. It was here that Dr. Drew sealed his fate, because about 90 minutes later, near Burlington, North Carolina, our car met with a terrible accident while he was driving. The cause of the accident was unknown, as it is even today.

When we left the doughnut shop, Dr. Drew was driving, Dr. Bullock was sitting in the front seat on the passenger side, I was in the back seat behind Dr. Bullock, and Dr. Ford was in the back seat behind Dr. Drew. The traffic was not heavy and Dr. Drew had no trouble getting back onto the highway. Continuing with our anecdotes and jokes, we soon became sleepy. I had no conscious awareness of anything that occurred beyond this point, until I awoke, sitting in the same position, with our car facing south, the direction we had been driving, about thirty yards into a cornfield on the left side of the highway. The car was right side up and only the left doors were open. I was terribly confused and had no idea what had happened and I appeared to be alone in the car. Dr. Ford and Dr. Drew were missing. Dr. Bullock was wedged under the dashboard of the front seat. When I got out to help Dr. Bullock become unwedged, he asked me what had happened, a question I was unable to answer, and where Dr. Drew was, another question I could not answer. We then began to inspect the surroundings. Dr. Bullock examined the front end of the car and I, the rear end. We found Dr. Drew lying on his back perpendicular to the front left wheel. He was alive, his breathing was irregular, and his face was pale and contorted as if in pain. Dr. Bullock examined the upper extremities while I examined the lower. There was an avulsion of the quadriceps muscle of the left leg, but there was no frank hemorrhage, not even from the avulsed injury. There was no bleeding from the mouth, nose, or ears. He was obviously in shock. Turning my attention from Dr. Drew and further exploring the surroundings, I saw Dr. Ford, quietly sitting on the ground about ten yards to the right, holding his arm. I went to him to inquire of his condition. He was dazed and complained of pain in his left arm. Examination of his left arm revealed a fracture of the left humerus. I suggested that he put his left hand between the buttons of his shirt to act as a sling.

By this time, motorists driving along the highway and observing our plight in the cornfield stopped to give whatever assistance they could. Within a short time the highway patrol came. A motorist had gone to the city to summon an ambulance, which appeared in about 15 minutes. While waiting, I inspected the highway to determine what had happened. On the roadway I observed tire marks that appeared to go off the right shoulder, then bend sharply to the left, leaving no tire marks or evidence of contact with the ground until about ten yards in a field to the left of the highway. Again, there was a marked

disruption of the ground about ten yards further into the field. We were told by a boy that our car had turned over about three times.

Dr. Ford was taken to the hospital by a motorist. The ambulance stopped on the shoulder of the highway and the stretchers were brought onto the field where Dr. Drew was lying. He was lifted onto the stretcher and taken to the ambulance. I was allowed to accompany him to the hospital. Dr. Bullock remained with the car to collect our baggage and was brought to the hospital by a patrolman.

At the hospital, I assisted the ambulance attendants in taking Dr. Drew into the emergency room of the Alamance General Hospital of Burlington, North Carolina. Dr. Drew was still alive, periodically gasping. In the emergency room, the attendants attempted to determine the extent of the injuries, checking the pulse and respiration. I was questioned as to what had happened and I replied, "We had an accident on the highway." While the attendants proceeded with their routine examination, a tall, ruddy, brown-haired man in a long white coat came in the emergency room and observed the patient. He asked in astonishment, "Is that Dr. Drew?" I answered, "Yes, we had an accident on the highway." In a commanding voice he ordered emergency measures. At his request, fluids were assembled and attempts were made to place a tourniquet around the right arm. I was escorted from the emergency room to the waiting room, where I waited until Dr. Bullock entered in great apprehension. He asked, "Is Dr. Drew still alive?" I said "I think so; they are working on him now." Dr. Bullock was then given an emergency examination that included x-ray examination of his back. In the meantime, Dr. Ford had been returned from the x-ray department, where he had been told that he had a fracture of the left humerus. An effort was made to console Dr. Ford while waiting for Dr. Bullock to return from the x-ray department. His x-ray diagnosis was negative for the fracture of the lumbar, spine, and pelvis.

A very sad communion prevailed while we awaited news of Dr. Drew's condition. After approximately two hours of what seemed an endless wait, a physician came and reported to us that Dr. Drew had died. He said, "We tried. We did the best we could. We started fluids but our efforts were unrewarded." We were given Dr. Drew's personal effects, and grief-stricken, left the hospital in a taxicab for the local railroad station to embark on our trip back to Washington, DC.

The treatment at the hospital, routine for accidental injuries in that region and specific for that period of time, suggests that a conscientious effort was made to revive Dr. Drew. It may be argued that given the same circumstances and the same period of time in other major medical centers, other results might have been obtained. But this would be pure speculation. Thus, we must assume that during the two or three hours that Dr. Drew lived, routine emergency treatment specific for that locality was administered and in spite of it, he failed to survive. There was no evidence to suggest that Dr. Drew received less than acceptable emergency treatment. It is hoped that this explanation of the management of Dr. Drew's injuries in the Alamance County General Hospital of Burlington, North Carolina, in the mid-morning of April 1, 1950, will put to rest the myths, innuendos, and rumors that suggest otherwise.

As the least injured of the group, the one who accompanied Dr. Drew from the scene of the accident to the hospital in the ambulance, and the one who last saw him alive, I offer the above documentary of the event, as I perceived it, to be a truthful, sincere, and factual account. It is a picture that has remained with me for over 30 years, one that I have tried to relate on many occasions, in many places, and when I have been questioned about the accident.

The loss of Dr. Drew, whose scientific achievements were well known and inspirational to all in the social, scholastic, athletic, and medical worlds, was the tragedy of reality that occurs so frequently in history. The loss was particularly acute for me professionally, for I was the last to be recruited by Dr. Drew, having been picked from the infantile paralysis unit of the John A. Andrews Hospital in 1949 to become senior resident of the orthopedic service at Freedmen's Hospital and a member of his select circle of trainees.

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