

# Padgett-Roache, Lula Edna (1922–1999)

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## SAMUEL LONDON, AND ANNA BLAIR

Samuel London, Ph.D., is a professor and chair of the Department of History and Political Science at Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama. He is the director of the Oakwood Office for the Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists. London wrote the book *Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement* (University Press of Mississippi, 2010). Samuel and his wife Laura reside in Priceville, Alabama.

Anna Blair is a practicing attorney and part-time instructor of Legal Studies in the Department of History and Political Science at Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama.

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Lula Edna Padgett-Roache established an accredited nursing program at Oakwood College (now a university) that continues to produce certified health-care professionals.

Lula (commonly known as Edna) was born on March 9, 1922, to Milton Padgett (1890–1976) and Amanda Ware (1895–1948) in Cincinnati, Ohio. Amanda and her sister, Antoinette Ware (1891–1984), both

attended Oakwood Junior College.<sup>1</sup> After Edna's birth the Padgetts moved to Willow Grove and then Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she attained her elementary and secondary education, graduating from Philadelphia's Germantown High School in 1939.<sup>2</sup>

Afterward, Edna worked for a year as a housekeeper, saving money to continue her education at the Harlem Hospital and School of Nursing in New York City, graduating in 1944.<sup>3</sup> In 1958 she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois. Edna went on to attain a Master of Education degree in counseling and guidance from the Chicago Teachers College–South in 1965. In 1972 she obtained a master's degree in nursing service administration from Columbia University in New York City.<sup>4</sup> While completing her studies at Harlem Hospital, Edna met Jonathan Elvyn Roache (1916–1991) during a meeting of the National



Lula Edna Padgett Roache

Photo courtesy of Oakwood University Archives.

Association for the Advancement of Adventist Youth at the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Manhattan. A courtship ensued, and they married on November 25, 1944.<sup>5</sup> The couple had two children, Jonathan, Jr., and Jennifer.

Mrs. Roache served as a staff nurse in several hospitals, a school nurse in New York City and Chicago, Illinois, a health teacher for the Chicago public schools, a guidance counselor at Northeastern Academy in New York City (1966–1967), assistant director of nursing at New York's Prospect Hospital, and director of nursing at Isabella Geriatric Center in New York.<sup>6</sup> In 1972 the Roaches accepted an invitation from Oakwood's president, Calvin Rock, for Jonathan to head the Office of Admissions and Edna to join Mrs. Ruth Stafford in the Department of Health and Nursing Education.<sup>7</sup> Since the closure of Oakwood's sanitarium in 1937, the school had ceased providing instruction toward the credentialing of nurses and other health-care providers.<sup>8</sup> However, Mrs. Roache developed a professional nursing curriculum and placed the department on a solid foundation by recruiting skilled faculty. Under her guidance Oakwood's Associate of Science nursing degree program (accredited by the Alabama State Board of Nursing) came into being. From 1972 to 1977 Mrs. Roache served as an assistant professor of nursing and the director of Oakwood's nursing program.<sup>9</sup> In 1977 she left Oakwood to help create the Central North Alabama Health Services clinic.<sup>10</sup> In 1982 Mrs. Roache returned to Oakwood, becoming the director of Student Health Services. She continued in this capacity until her retirement in 1988.<sup>11</sup>

Mrs. Roache was an active member of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, the American Nurses Association, the American College Health Association, and the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Nurses.<sup>12</sup> In retirement she continued serving as a deaconess at the Oakwood College church, a member of the bell choir, a health-care consultant, and an ambassador for the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society.<sup>13</sup> Following the death of her husband she established the Jonathan and Edna P. Roache Endowed Memorial Scholarship Fund.<sup>14</sup> Mrs. Roache died on December 15, 1999, at the age of 77 in Huntsville, Alabama.<sup>15</sup>

Mrs. Roache will be remembered for her efforts in establishing an accredited professional degree program for nursing at Oakwood. Furthermore, she and her husband were ardent supporters of Christian education who believed that young people should be given the opportunity to develop their full potential. Mrs. Roache put this belief into practice by establishing a scholarship fund for students. Consequently, the legacy of Jonathan and Edna P. Roache continues as the lives of students are transformed through the generous financial support provided by this endowed memorial scholarship.

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"Jonathan Elvyn Roache obituary." Oakwood College church, January 31, 1991. Oakwood University Archives.

"No. 17, Mrs. Edna Roache." Oakwood University Archives.

"Oakwood College Biographical Data Form–Edna P. Roache." September 6, 1972. Oakwood University Archives.

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"Pinning Ceremony Speaker, Oakwood College Commencement." 1997. Oakwood University Archives.

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## NOTES

1. "Edna P. Roache to Establish the Jonathan and Edna P. Roache Endowed Memorial Scholarship Fund," Oakwood University Archives.
2. "Edna Padgett Roache obituary," Oakwood College church, December 20, 1999, Oakwood University Archives. See also "Oakwood College Faculty/Staff Biographical Data Form–Edna P. Roache," September 18, 1986, Oakwood University Archives.
3. 1940 United States Census, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, enumeration district 51-530, "Padgett, Lula Edna," Ancestry.com, accessed April 10, 2019, <http://ancestry.com>. See also "Edna Padgett Roache obituary."
4. "Pinning Ceremony Speaker, Oakwood College Commencement," 1997, Oakwood University Archives. See also "Oakwood College Biographical Data Form–Edna Padgett Roache," December 20, 1976, Oakwood University Archives.
5. "Jonathan Elvyn Roache obituary," Oakwood College church, January 31, 1991, Oakwood University Archives.
6. "Pinning Ceremony Speaker, Oakwood College Commencement." See also "Oakwood College Biographical Data Form–Edna Padgett Roache"; "Oakwood College Biographical Data Form–Edna P. Roache," September 6, 1972, Oakwood University Archives.
7. "Edna Padgett Roache obituary." See also "Jonathan Elvyn Roache obituary"; "Oakwood College Biographical Data Form–Edna P. Roache."
8. Benjamin Baker, ed. *A Place Called Oakwood* (Huntsville, Alabama: Oakwood College, 2007), iv.

9. "Edna Padgett Roache obituary." See also "Oakwood College Department of Nursing," Oakwood University Archives; "No. 17, Mrs. Edna Roache," Oakwood University Archives.
10. "Edna Padgett Roache obituary."
11. "Oakwood College Faculty/Staff Biographical Data Form–Edna P. Roache." See also "No. 17, Mrs. Edna Roache."
12. "Pinning Ceremony Speaker, Oakwood College Commencement." See also "Oakwood College Faculty/Staff Biographical Data Form–Edna P. Roache."
13. Ibid. See also "No. 17, Mrs. Edna Roache."
14. "Edna P. Roache to Establish the Jonathan and Edna P. Roache Endowed Memorial Scholarship Fund."
15. "Edna Padgett Roache obituary."

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