

Westney, Lennox Samuel (1928–2016)

OUIDA E. WESTNEY

Ouida E. Westney

Lennox Samuel Westney was a medical doctor and teacher from Jamaica.

Early Life

Born on December 24, 1928 to Rosetta Vaughan Westney and Carlton George Westney in Kingston, Jamaica, Lennox was the second of their three children. In his formative years, his parents laid his religious and spiritual foundation by their devout church membership and attendance at the North Street Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was in this church that Lennox and his brother, Adrian, were later baptized by Pastors M. G. Nembhard and F. E. Roy Jeffries in 1943.

Lennox Westney's early education began at Half-Way-Tree Elementary School followed by New Hope College (Kingsway High School) where he successfully completed his Senior Cambridge Examination. He then went to West Indian Training College (now Northern Caribbean University), where he completed an associate degree in Pastoral Ministry in 1948. A ministerial internship followed under the mentorship of Pastor A. D. Laing in Portland, Jamaica. At this time, there arose the need for a principal at the North Street Elementary Church School and Lennox was asked to serve. He served in that capacity for a year before leaving for the United States in 1951 to further his education.

Advanced Education and Marriage

Lennox desired to be a medical missionary and enrolled as a pre-medical student at Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts, but due to a stomach condition and the long science laboratory hours required, he had to change his major. Instead, he completed the Bachelor of Arts degree in History, graduating *magna cum laude* in 1953, followed by a Master of Arts degree in History and Political Science at Columbia University in New York in 1954. While working on this master's degree, Lennox was employed by the Northeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and taught at the Northeastern Academy in Bronx, New York.

On December 19, 1954, Lennox Samuel Westney and Ouida Elaine Spleen were married by Pastors A. D. Laing and W. U. Campbell at the North Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kingston, Jamaica. Ouida was a registered nurse and certified mid-wife. After spending five months in Jamaica, Lennox and Ouida migrated to

the United States as permanent residents. In the fall of that year, Lennox returned to Atlantic Union College to complete his premedical science studies. In 1957, he was admitted into the Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C. and was awarded his medical degree in May 1961.

After completing a year of rotating internship at Howard University Hospital, Lennox did his specialty training in obstetrics and gynecology under the tutelage of Dr. Frank Kaltreider at the Baltimore City Hospital (now Francis Scott Key Medical Center). Upon completion of his specialty training in 1966, he served at that same institution as Assistant Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology for two years. Before leaving Baltimore to return to the Metropolitan Washington area, the Westneys had become the parents of three children: Lennox Samuel, Jr., Irving Vaughan and Ouida Lenaine. The latter two are physicians. During the years that he spent in Baltimore, he served as a local elder at the Berea Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Medical Practice

In 1968 Dr. Westney returned to Washington, D.C. where he was employed by the District of Columbia Health Department, as well as being in private practice. In 1971, he was appointed as Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Howard University College of Medicine and the Howard University Hospital. He was involved in the care of patients and in teaching medical students and residents. His practice focused on high risk obstetric patients with conditions such as multiple gestations, sickle cell anemia and diabetes. One highlight of his skill and specialty in the care of high-risk pregnancies at Howard University Hospital, was his leadership of the medical and allied health team who participated in the management and delivery of the hospital's first and only set of quintuplets in 1991. He was well known in the hospital for his practice of praying for his patients before deliveries and surgical procedures. He was featured pictorially in the 1984 Howard University Hospital calendar praying for his patient prior to the beginning of her caesarean section.¹

As a medical doctor, Lennox made numerous professional presentations. He published more than thirty articles in peer-reviewed professional journals. He was a Fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and had membership in a number of medical professional organizations. He was a member of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society and the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions from professional, governmental and community agencies.

Family Ministries

Dr. Westney was very interested in family life ministries. It was a specialty area of his wife who had a doctorate in the area of human development and family relationships and was a certified family life educator. Together, they teamed up in a medical and family relationships educational ministry. From 1976 through 1980, they served on the Home and Family Service Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. One of the tasks of the committee was to publish the first preparation for marriage manuals for the Adventist

Church. The Westneys were among the co-authors of the manuals which were: *Marriage Education*² and *Togetherness, Oneness, Joy: Companion Notebook for Marriage Education*³

In summer 1978, the Westneys received instruction in Marriage Enrichment Leadership Training at Andrews University. For almost thirty years they served in family ministry at the local church and local conference levels, counseling individuals and couples, presenting lectures, seminars, marriage retreats and family retreats. In 2001, they were presented the "Distinguished Award in Family Ministries" by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Church and Community Involvement

At the First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D.C., Dr. Westney served as an elder - and part of the time as first elder - for more than twenty-five years. He was a member of the executive committee of the Allegheny East Conference as well as the medical secretary for that conference from 1977 through 1980. He also provided medical services at the annual camp meetings for many years. He served on the board of directors of the Washington Adventist Hospital and of the Shady Grove Adventist Hospital. He participated in conducting many 'Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking' programs and was recognized by the American Temperance Society with its *Distinguished Service Award* at the General Conference Session in Dallas, Texas in 1980. He also assisted at the Breath of Life crusades conducted by Elder C. D. Brooks in Washington, D.C. - by providing health education instruction prior to the sermons. Between 1990 and 1996, he served both as a member, and as chairman of the board of the George E. Peters Adventist School in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Later Life

Dr. Westney retired as Professor Emeritus from the active teaching and practice of obstetrics and gynecology in 1998.⁴ However, he remained active in family health education and in family life ministries, presenting lectures and seminars at church, camp meetings, and retreats.

In 1996, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He was grateful to have been successfully treated with proton beam therapy at the Loma Linda University Hospital. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2004, and this presented a journey of bodily decline which he gracefully accepted, and with which he endeavored to cope, with God's help.

In 2003, Dr. Westney was granted the Christian Service Award by the First Church of Seventh-day Adventists "For Tireless Years of Dedicated Service as an Outstanding Local Elder." In 2007, he was recognized by the Northern Caribbean University for outstanding contribution to the growth and development of the university. In 2008, to much acclaim, he published his autobiography titled, *Just As I Am: Challenged But Confident – A Story of Surmounting and Serving*.⁵ In 2012, the General Conference of SDA awarded the Arthur and Maud Spalding Distinguished Service Family Ministries Medallion to Lennox and his wife for their contribution to the Church's

Family Ministries.

After suffering with Parkinson's disease for twelve years, Lennox departed this life on Thursday, March 10, 2016 at his home in Highland, Maryland surrounded by his family.⁶

Legacy

Ministering to others in the medical, educational, church and family life fields stand out as meaningful contributions of Dr. Westney. He was a contributor to academic institutions in Jamaica, providing support to the Northern Caribbean University in the establishment of the Brown-Westney Basic Sciences Complex as well as to Kingsway High School for the creation of the Dr. Lennox Westney Science Laboratory.

Many have benefitted from his words of wisdom offered in his classes, in his sermons, in graduation commencement addresses, in other formal expositions and in his day to day communication with family, friends and others.

Lennox Samuel Westney was a Christian physician who devoted his life to academic and applied medicine, service in his church, family life ministries, and to aiding in the fostering of Christian educational institutions. He was deeply, yet gently passionate about serving humanity in whatever ways he could. Above all, Dr. Westney has left a legacy of a consistent, exemplary Christian life.

SOURCES

Funeral Program: Thanksgiving Celebration of The Life and Legacy of Lennox S. Westney, M.D.- December 24, 1928- March 10, 2016.

Howard University Hospital calendar, August 1984. Howard University Hospital, Washington, D.C.

Togetherness, Oneness, Joy: Companion Notebook for Marriage Education Home and Family Service, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington D.C., 1979.

Westney Lennox S. *Just as I Am: Challenged but Confident – A Story of Surmounting and Serving.* Bloomington, Indiana: Trafford Publishing, 2008.

NOTES

1. Howard University Hospital calendar, August 1984, Howard University Hospital, Washington, D.C.

2. *Marriage Education.* Home and Family Service, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1979.

3. *Togetherness, Oneness, Joy: Companion Notebook for Marriage Education*, Home and Family Service, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Washington D.C., 1979.
 4. Lennox S. Westney, *Curriculum Vitae*, 2015, in the author's private collection.
 5. Lennox S Westney, *Just as I Am: Challenged but Confident – A Story of Surmounting and Serving* (Bloomington, Indiana: Trafford Publishing, 2008)
 6. Funeral Program: Thanksgiving Celebration of The Life and Legacy of Lennox S. Westney, M.D.- December 24, 1928-March 10, 2016.
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