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Lyda Moore Merrick, 96, Founder Of A Magazine For The Blind

The founder of the *Merrick-Washington Magazine for the Blind*, Mrs. Lyda Moore Merrick, 96, of 829 Lawson St., died Valentine's Day morning in Durham County General Hospital.

Inspired by "a little blind baby" named John Washington, whom she temporarily adopted in 1922, Mrs. Merrick started the magazine from scratch by saving notes, clippings and filings from other magazines and then condensing them for her magazine two weeks before each quarterly issue hit the press.

Merrick recounted in an 1979 interview with the *Durham Morning Herald* that money was a continual problem.

"I was a poor beggar, but somehow each issue came out," she said.

"Ed [her husband, E.R. Merrick] would often dip into his own pocket to help.

"I would say, 'Ed, we owe this to the Lord ... we have been saved to serve,'" she said.

"The Braille magazines in existence at the time carried no news of black accomplishments, and I thought it was time for us to know the truth," she said.

Mrs. Merrick often said that in her quest for material she tried to use what would interest her if she were blind.

Issues on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Eleanor Roosevelt were the kind Mrs. Merrick liked, as well as those with an emphasis on black history. She was known to use excerpts from such periodicals as *Ebony*, *Jet* and *Essence*.

The first magazine of its kind in the world was first published under the name *The Negro Braille Magazine*. The name was changed in 1979.



Lyda Moore Merrick
Started magazine from scratch

"Our race went through many name changes; we were negro, colored, and then black. The board [of the magazine] decided that we didn't want to just be known as black anymore ... so the name of the magazine was changed to *Merrick-Washington Magazine for the Blind*," Mrs. Merrick's daughter, Constance Merrick Watts, said in a telephone interview Saturday night.

The *Merrick-Washington Magazine for the Blind* is now published semiannually with an average of 78 pages.

Founded in 1952, it continues to be supported through contributions and about 600 subscribers. Dr. Ila J. Blue is the current editor.

"I became interested in start-

ing the magazine because I have a great deal of respect for the blind," Mrs. Merrick said in the 1979 interview. "They don't call it a handicap, just an inconvenience."

Mrs. Merrick was a native of Durham County and was a 1911 graduate of Fisk University. She was a member of St. Joseph's AME Church, where she was a member of the choir, played the organ and taught Sunday school. She also was a member of Daughters of Dorcas Club, Volkemia Literary Club and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and was past chairman of Stanford Warren Library board.

Mrs. Merrick received the Community Recognition Award in 1982 from Daughters of Isis of Zafa Court No. 41. She was chosen as one of the Mother's of the Year of 1979 by the Durham area Merchant's Association.

She was the daughter of Dr. Aaron Moore, Durham's first black physician.

In 1981, she also received the Baha'i Community of Durham Humanitarian Award in observance of World Peace Day.

The funeral will be conducted at 2 p.m. Tuesday in St. Joseph's AME Church by the Rev. W.W. Easley. Burial will be Beechwood Cemetery.

Surviving are two daughters, Mrs. Vivian M. Sansom of Raleigh and Mrs. Constance M. Watts of Durham; eight grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to *Merrick-Washington Magazine for the Blind*.

The family will receive visitors from 6 to 7 p.m. Monday at Seaborough & Hargett Memorial Chapel.