

Celestine Sibley

Grace Hamilton Changes Jobs But She Isn't Leaving Atlanta



There was an announcement the other day that Grace Towns Hamilton is leaving the Atlanta Urban League, which she has served with such distinction since 1943, to take a job as community relations consultant in the Southern region with the National Women's Christian Ass'n. I received the news without pleasure until I learned that the new post does not mean that she will be leaving Atlanta. Then I felt better.

Atlanta has its race problems, no denying. The perilous business of getting along with our fellow man has many areas where we haven't exactly covered ourselves with glory. There are misunderstandings and gross inequities. But such harmony as exists between the white and Negro communities and such achievements as the two races have built together are due in a large measure to

the intelligence, the diplomacy and the enormous patience, energy and humor of Grace Hamilton.

She is without a doubt one of our outstanding citizens.

For years before I knew her I was interested in the quiet, smartly dressed Negro woman who showed up at various public meetings. She rarely spoke but when she did she had some-

thing to say. She came armed with facts and logic and her courteous, no-nonsense presentation of them invariably won the admiration of even the die-hards who are prejudiced against a woman speaking out in meeting and verge on apoplexy at the idea of a Negro woman raising her voice.

The gains she and the Atlanta Urban League sought for Negroes in the areas of housing, public health and hospital care, education and recreation facilities have been slow and hard-won. But each step forward has had a sound foundation, for Mrs. Hamilton has gone after facts, gathered figures, spared no effort to know exactly what was needed and how badly and where the resources were.

Once I heard a man who had small sympathy with any Negro effort toward betterment admit he approved some project because Mrs. Hamilton had convinced him that it was for the good of the whole city.

"A damned sensible woman," he said gruffly. "And she loves this old Atlanta."

Atlanta is Grace Hamilton's home town and she loves it and knows it far better than most citizens. But sometimes I think the hill where she lives may have given her the patience and the perspective for her effectiveness.

Although she has traveled far she has always come back to Atlanta. She and her husband, Dr. Henry Cooke Hamilton, registrar at Morehouse College, built next door to her parents a small, modern house with a little garden on one side and on the other — the gleaming, seething, muddle-headed but growing city she loves so well.

We are lucky her new job won't take Grace Hamilton away from Atlanta.



'No Kidding—Are You Guys Really Volunteers?'