

CRUSADERS



EMMA DELANEY (HS, '94, MT, '96)
Missionary to Africa

She became the fifth Spelmanite to go to Africa when she sailed on January 15, 1902 to Nyasaland in British East Africa. Having also completed Spelman's Nurses Training course, she was able to provide medical assistance to tribesmen, but perhaps her greatest accomplishment was the establishment of a school to train native leaders, which was in operation in 1905 when she was forced to return home because of poor health. Daniel Malekebu, who as a boy at the mission came under Miss Delaney's influence, ran away from home at age 16 after her departure and after overcoming many obstacles finally made it to Atlanta. He and Miss Delaney were guests of Clara Howard at Spelman for several days where he met Flora Zeto who had been brought by Miss Howard from Africa. They were married in the chapel at Spelman in 1919 and a year later sailed for Nyasaland where they were to continue the work Miss DeLaney had begun. They rebuilt her mission, got the farm lands under cultivation, the school in running condition and built a church and small hospital. Following Miss DeLaney's plan, they began training groups of teachers and preachers to work in the surrounding countryside. And so it was that the Providence Industrial Mission at Chiradzulu was built on the ruins of the mission started by Miss DeLaney many years earlier. All of the work at the mission, which later included eleven buildings, was done entirely by Africans with no assistance by Europeans. The three school buildings, the hospital, and the church were designed by Dr. Malekebu (who received his MD from Meharry Medical College) and built of brick which he taught the natives how to make. One of the school buildings is named Spelman Hall because Spelman sent the first money the Malekebus received when their building program began. This Mission is certainly a monument to the vision and determination of Miss DeLaney as well as the Malekebus who were influenced by her.

Unable to return to Nyasaland after her return home in 1906, Miss DeLaney proceeded to raise money for establishing a mission in Liberia and went to Monrovia in 1912 under the sponsorship of the Negro National Baptist Convention. After clearing the land and building houses she was finally able to realize her dream — the Suehn Industrial Mission, where she remained for eight years. She returned to the U.S. in poor health mainly for the purpose of raising funds for further work and was at Spelman in 1922 with high hopes of returning to her mission. A few months later, however, she died of blackwater fever at her mother's home in Florida. In 1962 the Mission celebrated its 50th anniversary.



MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN (C '60)
Chair, Board of Trustees, Spelman College

Atty. Edelman, a veteran civil rights lawyer, is also founder and director of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), a non-profit child advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. The Washington Research Project (CDF's parent organization), was also organized by her (in 1968) to help poor and minority persons investigate and monitor the many federal programs passed in the 1960s to serve them. CDF was established as a means of providing systematic and long-range assistance to children and to make their needs an important matter of public policy. Atty. Edelman's work with the CDF and her passionate devotion to the rights of children has brought her national recognition as "the children's crusader" (*Essence*, September, 1980). The comprehensive CDF publication, *Portrait of Inequality: Black and White Children in America* should foster additional support for this tremendous crusade for children. Atty. Edelman's crusading activities began during her senior year at Spelman when she participated in sit-ins in downtown Atlanta. She also helped to organize the conference in Raleigh, North Carolina, which resulted in the founding of SNCC. After graduation, she entered Yale Law School and at age 26 became the first black woman to pass the bar in Mississippi. Her crusading continued when she headed the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund in Mississippi (1964-1968). She was also director of the Center for Law and Education at Harvard. In 1980, she became the first black and the second woman to chair Spelman's Board of Trustees.