

African American surgeons in the south after WWII- separate.... but equal?

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Halsted Society
Charleston, SC
September 2019



Disclosures

Medical Engineering Innovations

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Inoblative Designs

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Unconsciousness, the default setting, the rat race, the constant gnawing sense of having had and lost, some infinite thing...

“The most important realities are the hardest to see, and talk about...”



Surgical care in South Carolina

Access

Providers



Cannon Street Infirmary



Surgical care in South Carolina

Access

Providers

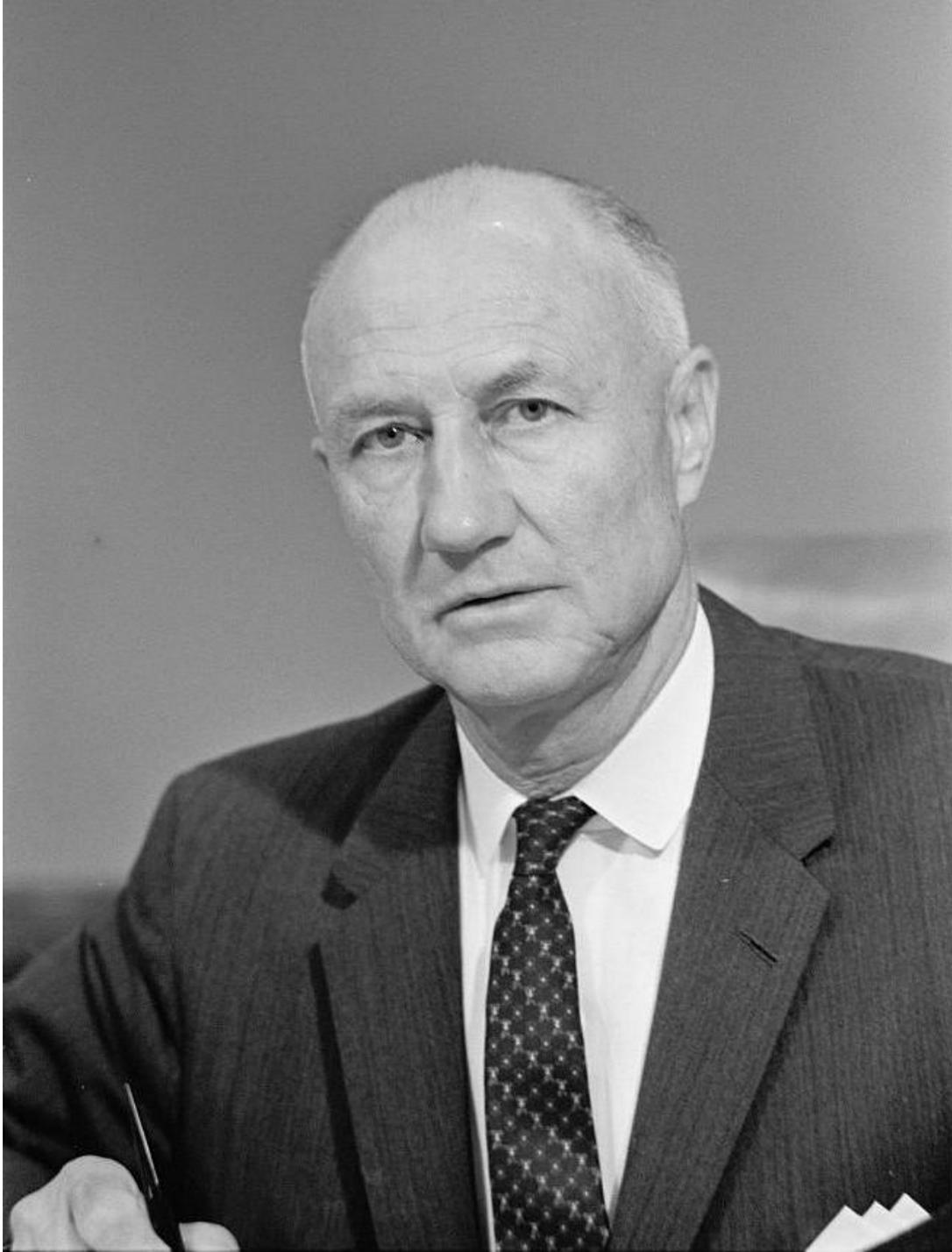
- › Education in South Carolina after the civil war



3 Protagonists

The segregationist governor





3 Protagonists

The segregationist governor

Educational segregation today





3 Protagonists

The segregationist governor

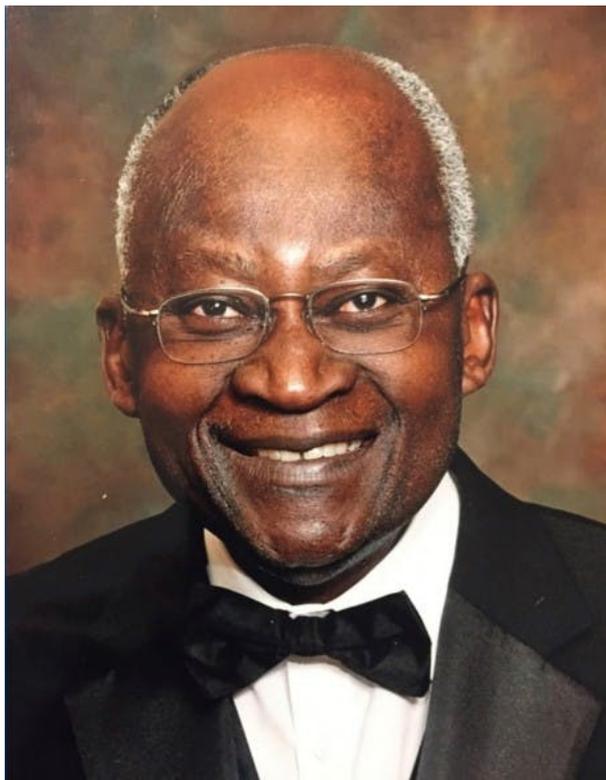
Educational segregation today

The surgeons





Charles_DeWitt_Watts



Onye Akwari



Middleton Huger Lambright Jr



Education in South Carolina

Slavery 1619-1865

- › Education of enslaved African Americans was illegal

Reconstruction 1865- 1868

- › Public education was instituted
- › Eventually the federal government ceased opposition to segregation in the south
- › The new public school system then became 2

Segregation- education 1868-1964

- › Plessy vs Fergusson- separate but equal 1896
- › Brown v Board of education 1954
- › Larry Kobrovsky- 2005

The end of WW II

Housing

- Shelley v Kramer- Housing segregation was illegal 1948 (argued for the NAACP by Thurgood Marshall)
- Housing act of 1949- subsidized white housing only (Truman)

Education

- Brown vs board of education



Briggs v Elliott

- Filed in Charleston federal court by Thurgood Marshall 1950
- Clarendon County- 33 white school buses, 0 Black
- What happened to the petitioners-





10 85

BRIGGS V. ELLIOTT
(Continued from other side)

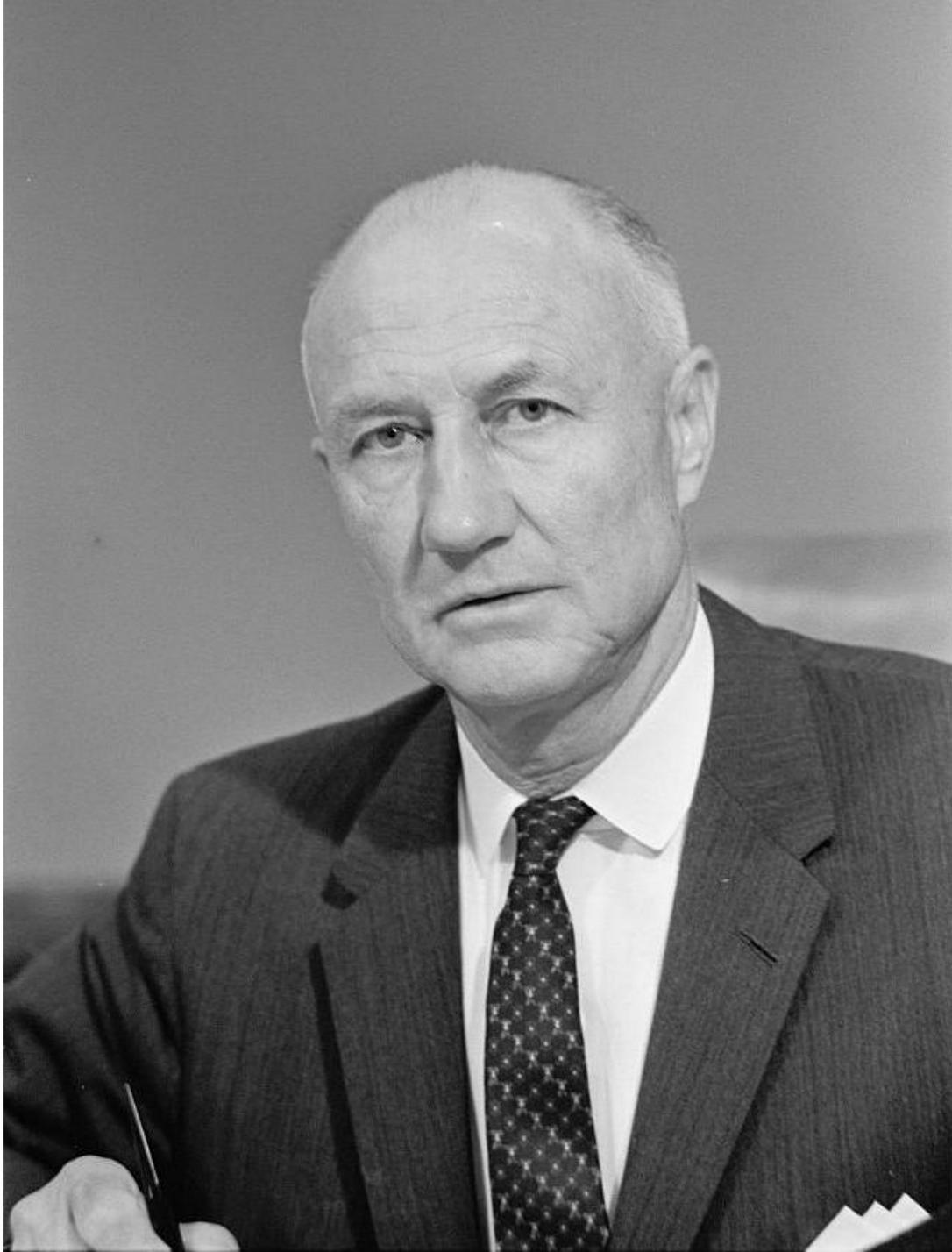
Thurgood Marshall and other NAACP Legal Defense Fund lawyers represented Harry and Eliza Briggs and 19 other courageous parents from Clarendon County, in a bold and vigorous dissent opposing the prevailing doctrine of separate but equal. Waring declared that segregation "must go and must go now. Segregation is per se inequality." The U.S. Supreme Court followed his analysis as a central part of its groundbreaking decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

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So, this segregation thing was in the past
and is of only historic interest after WWII....





Crooked Path Made Straight: The Rise and Fall of the Southern Governors' Plan to Educate Black Physicians

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ABSTRACT

In 1945, a wave of GI-Bill-supported African American students, qualified for admission to medical schools, returned from their service in World War II. The possibility that their acceptance would integrate all-white medical schools was a problem for the southern governors. The governors responded with a carefully considered plan to shunt these African American applicants to historically black medical colleges by joining in a Compact and attempting to purchase Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. This untold story of American medicine and its connection to our present shortage of African American physicians in the South needs to be remembered and passed on to future generations.

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KEYWORDS: African Americans; History; Medical school

THE MEETING AT WAKULLA SPRINGS

A meeting of the Southern Governors' Conference was called in Wakulla Springs, Florida on February 7, 1948.¹ Present were a powerhouse of white southern politicians including Jim Folsom of Alabama, Jimmie Davis of Louisiana, Millard Caldwell of Florida, R. Gregg Cherry of North Carolina, and Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, with their lieutenant governors and entourages. The governors were on an urgent mission to sign an agreement that had been years in the making. Now, the South would have its own medical school for African Americans: Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee (Figures 1, 2).²

PRESSURE AND PLANNING

Only a decade earlier, the United States Supreme Court had opened the all-white University of Missouri Law School to African Americans on the grounds that the state-supported, out-of-state study they provided was not equivalent to that

afforded white law students in-state.³ This ruling threatened the existing segregation in state institutions of higher learning perpetuated by the "separate but equal" ruling in the 1896 US Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v Ferguson*.⁴ And now, as African American troops returned home from World War II, and the financial support of the GI Bill became available, pressure for admission of blacks to attend segregated state universities was increasing.

Historically, many southern states had provided "scholarships" to traditionally black institutions for African American applicants to state professional schools in order to preserve segregation in their all-white institutions. For instance, the Committee of Southern Regional Studies and Education of the American Council of Education had an arrangement for "student exchange programs." The governors knew the committee's part-time executive secretary, Dr John E. Ivey, Jr.¹

Medical education was an increasing concern, as there were few black medical professionals and fewer interested white ones to care for black patients. There were ongoing conversations among the governors of southern states about the use of Meharry Medical College in Nashville as a fee-for-service "regional center for Negro education." Meharry, a Methodist-affiliated institution, was established and run by well-intentioned white businessmen to educate black medical professionals to care for black patients. Finances there were a chronic problem. As early as September 1943,

Funding: None.

Conflict of Interest: None.

Authorship: All authors had access to the data and a role in writing the manuscript.

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So, this segregation thing was in the past
and is of only historic interest....

The education system is now for certain color blind....





Larry Kabrovsky

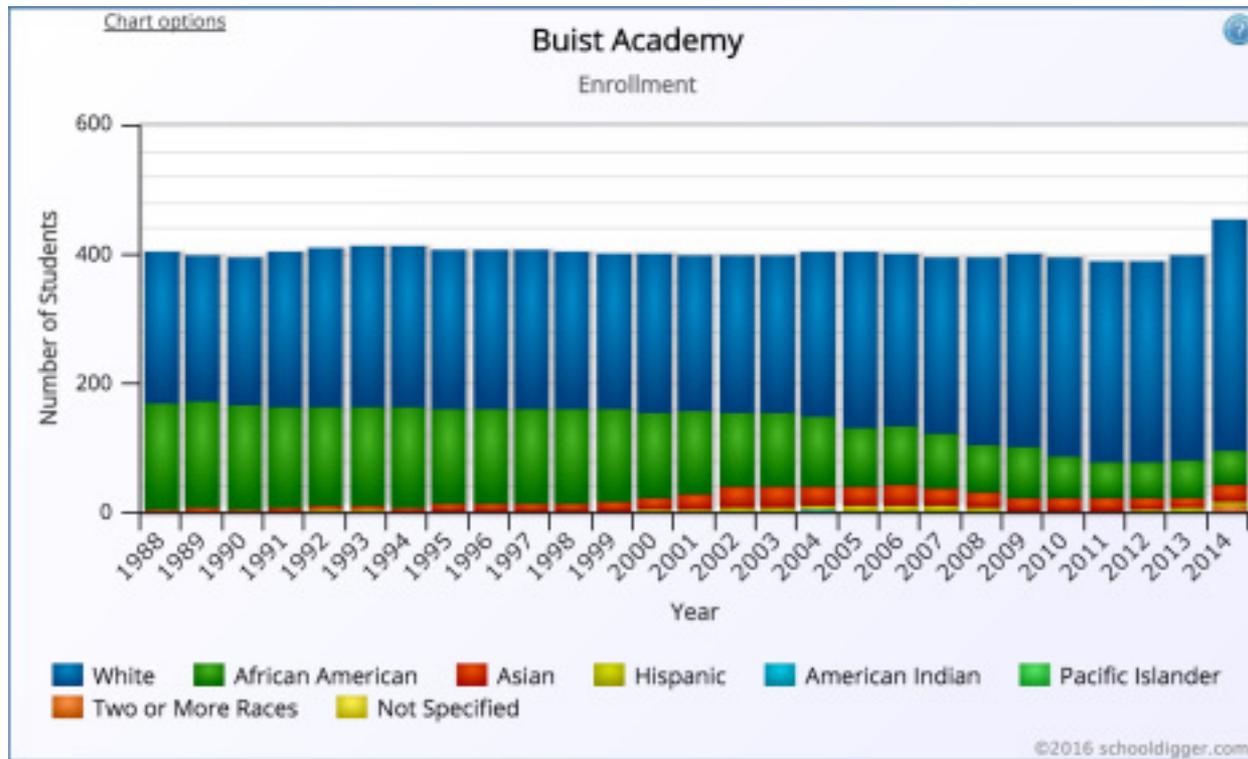


SC

- Buist and Memminger are elementary schools .7 miles apart
- Buist was formed in the 80s as an integrated academic powerhouse
- Buist by charter was to be 40% minority
- Larry Kabrovsky sued the board of education



The Kabrovsky effect



Buist Academy

Public, Magnet K-8

▶ 103 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC 29401

☎ (843) 724-7750

District: Charleston 01

SchoolDigger Rank:

1st of 624 South Carolina Elementary Schools



Student/teacher ratio: 17.7

Number of students: 479

Racial breakdown:

White: 80.2%

African American: 9.4%

Asian: 5.2%

[more](#)

Free/discounted lunch recipients: 6.3%

 [View homes for sale near Buist Academy](#)

★ [See top rated South Carolina elementary schools](#)

☰ [Compare Buist Academy to nearby elementary schools!](#)



Memminger Elementary

Public, Magnet PK, KG-5

▶ 20 Beaufain Street
Charleston, SC 29401

☎ (843) 724-7778

District: Charleston 01

SchoolDigger Rank:

587th of 624 South Carolina Elementary Schools



Student/teacher ratio: 11.3

Number of students: 294

Racial breakdown:

African American:	88.8%
White:	8.8%
Asian:	1.0%
more	

Free/discounted lunch recipients: 100.0%

 [View homes for sale near Memminger Elementary](#)

★ [See top rated South Carolina elementary schools](#)

☰ [Compare Memminger Elementary to nearby elementary schools!](#)



Academic Magnet High School

- One the top 10 high schools in the US
 - All of the graduates go on to higher education
 - Ten years ago, 13% of AMHS students were on free- or reduced-lunch.
 - Today that figure stands at 3.6%.
 - So here's the real scandal: almost half of all students in public schools in Charleston County are poor: 48%.
 - The Academic Magnet assigns these kids just 4% of its seats.
 - 16 of 664 students are Black
-
- Joe Kelly 2016 the Glebe St Hacks

Charleston county school district

Of the school district's roughly 50,000 students 47 percent are white. But of the district's 85 elementary, middle, high, charter and magnet schools, at least 18 have student bodies that are 80 percent or more black. Seventeen schools have student bodies that are at least 80 percent white.

When the newly elected school board proposed this year to combine the Buist and Memminger *public* schools the uproar by the Buist parents was immediate



Black or African American Physicians by Age and Sex, 2013

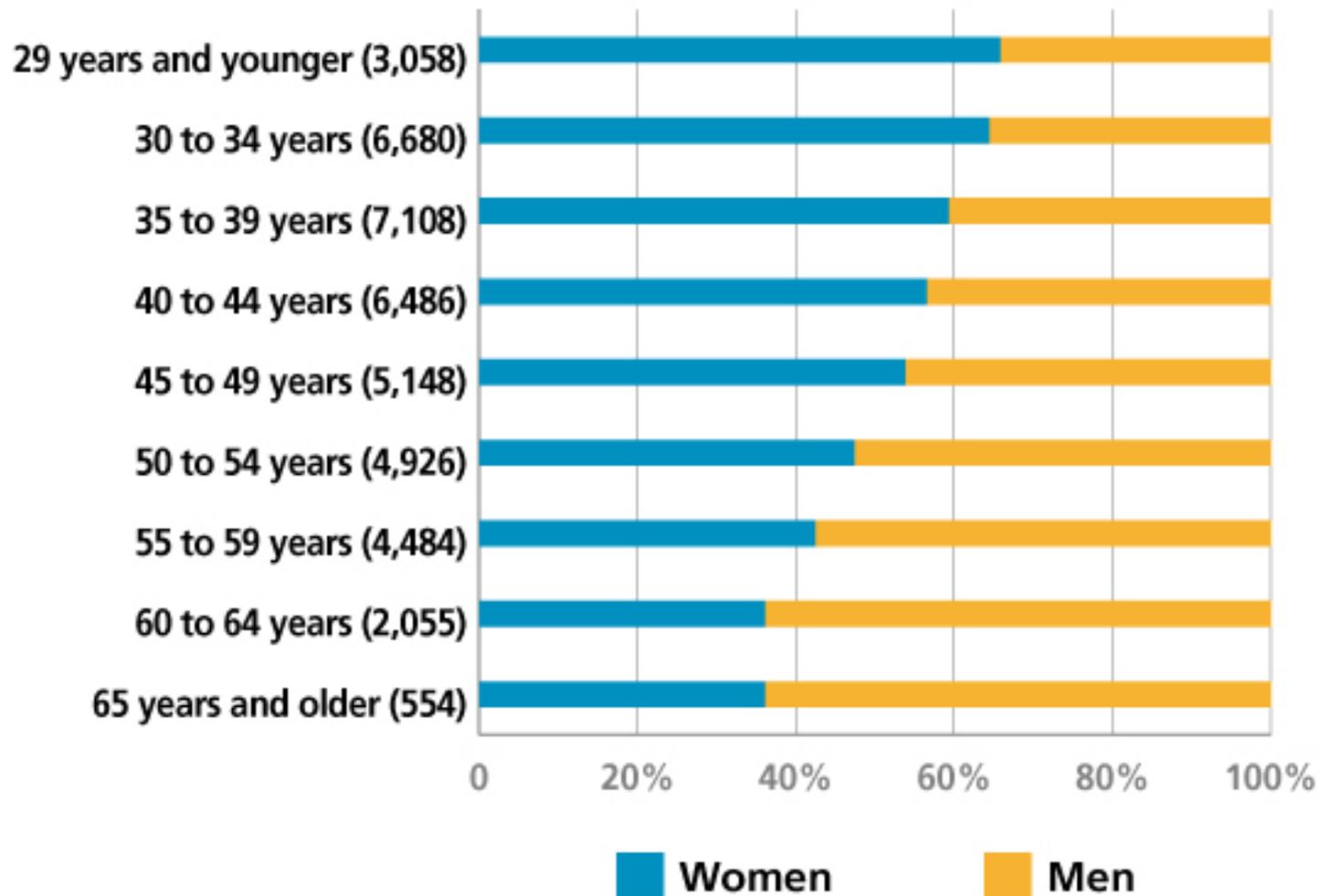
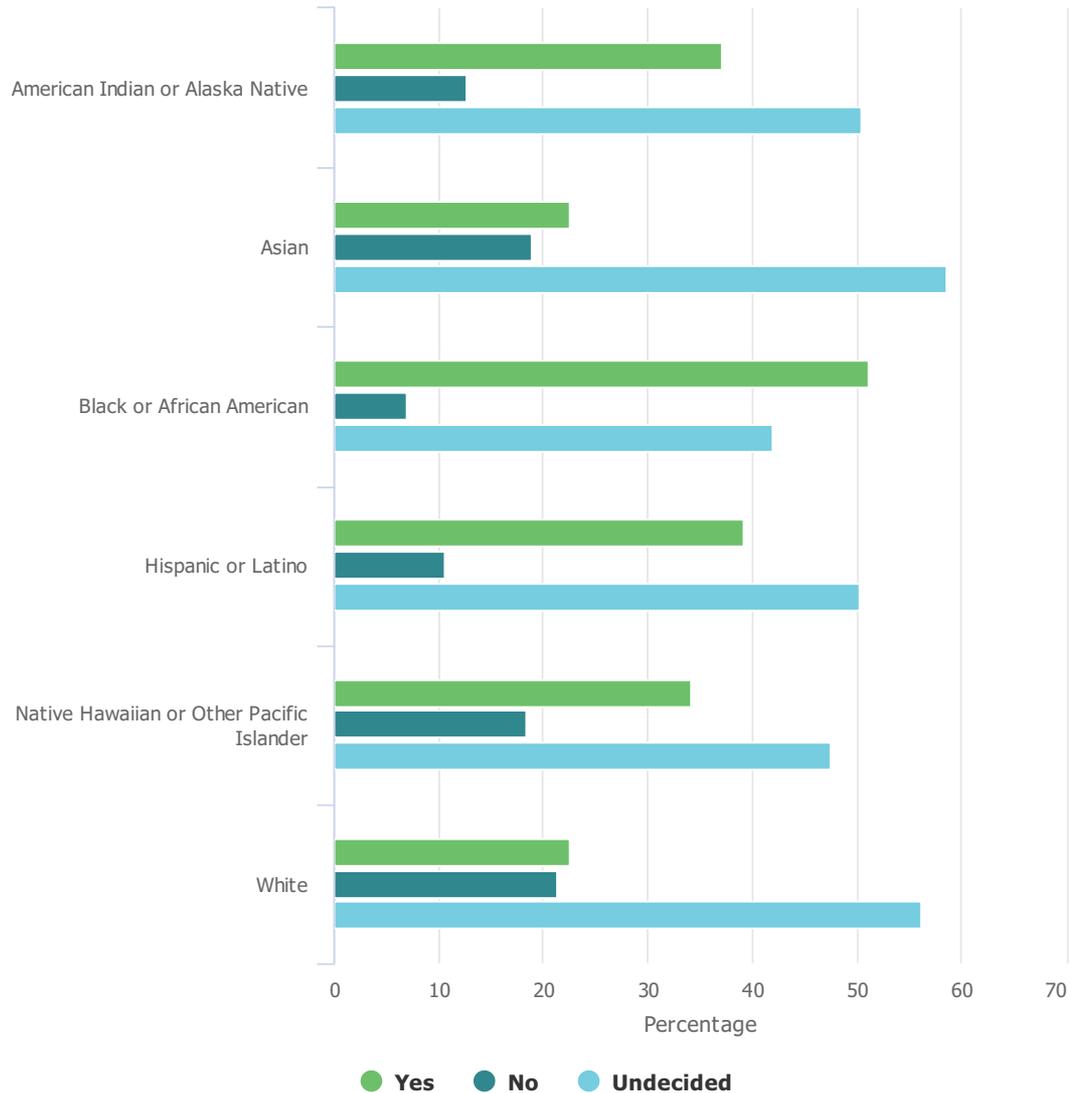


Figure 28. Percentage of 2015 U.S. medical school matriculants planning to practice in an underserved area by race and ethnicity.

Note: The numbers reflect the percentage responding to the following Matriculating Student Questionnaire (MSQ) question: Do you plan to work primarily in an underserved area? The totals in each race/ethnicity category include all individuals who selected that category, alone or in combination with any other category. Numbers include U.S. citizens and Permanent Residents only. Source: AAMC MSQ data, as of Aug. 1, 2016.

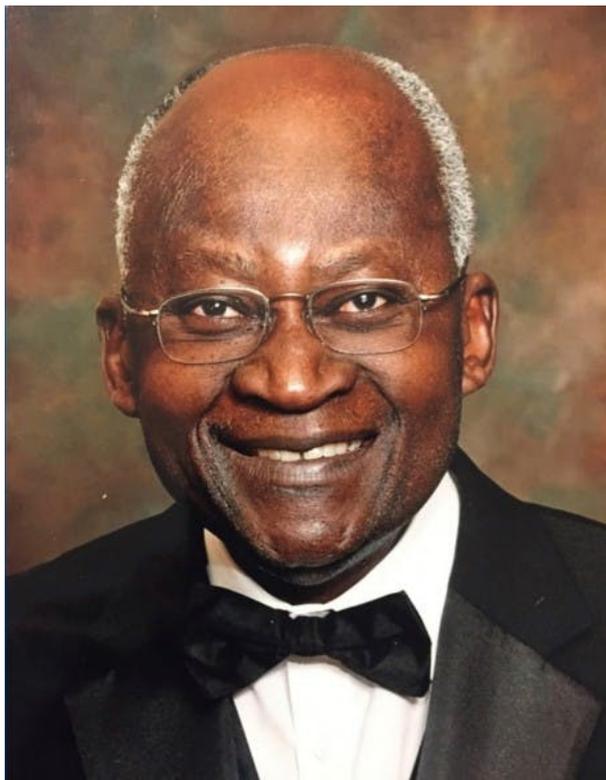


So, would you move to the Carolinas if you were a African American surgeon?





Charles_DeWitt_Watts



Onye Akwari



Middleton Huger Lambright Jr



North Carolina

- **Charles Watts**
 - **1950** The first board certified African American surgeon in North Carolina.
 - Medical and surgical training- Howard
 - Mentor- Charles Drew
 - Elected to the Institute of Medicine
 - Started a hospital for the poor- Lincoln Hospital
 - Founded Durham regional medical center now part of Duke.
 - Was on board of the North Carolina mutual insurance company and medical director.
 - Taught Duke surgical residents until the early 80s.



North Carolina

- Onye Akwari
 - **1978** First African American faculty member at Duke- (10 years after desegregation of Duke hospital)
 - UW, USC (student body president), Mayo
 - Third First African American faculty member and first to be awarded tenure at Duke Medical School
 - Founder of the Society of Black Academic Surgeons
 - Hosted first SBAS meeting in Durham with David Sabiston 1989

“My dream was to do something useful and being useful means doing something for other people”



South Carolina

- Dr Middleton Huger Lambright Sr. was born in Summerville, SC in 1865. His parents were both formerly enslaved.
- He was initially attracted to medicine when he accompanied his father to Charleston and saw the young men in white coats at the Medical College of SC.
- He attended college in SC at Claflin college, and received his MD at Meharry.
- He initially practiced in Kansas City but moved his family to Cleveland to avoid a segregated education for his children.





CHM-59



- Dr Middleton Huger Lambright Jr. was raised in Cleveland
- He received his MD at Meharry and completed surgical training in at Western reserve hospital.
- **1943** He was the first Black physician to receive hospital privileges in Cleveland at Western Reserve hospital
- He founded the first interracial hospital in Cleveland (Forest City Hospital) with his father.
- **1964-** He was the second African American president of a local AMA chapter-
- **1972-** He was recruited to MUSC in as the first African American board certified surgeon at MUSC and associate dean



He was quoted in 1972:

“My father would have been extremely pleased to know that his son had been invited to join the staff and faculty of an institution he could not have hoped to enter in any capacity.”

- He was welcomed to the state by Strom Thurman



Conclusions

The GIs returning from WW II were a big problem for segregationists

At great personal cost a few pioneers moved into the south to try and provide better surgical care and begin to form a pipeline for African American surgeons.

Privilege is a very tricky thing- this talk caused me to examine mine

- So you want to talk about race? Ijeoma Oluo

The way to succeed in the US if you lack privilege is via the public education system

Do not ignore local elections- make certain that you are not represented by a Larry Kobrovsky. Every election has a candidate like him.

