



## Phillip Nathaniel Reed - Religion and Education

Starting out as a young educator, Phillip Nathaniel Reed might very well have envisioned, as the pinnacle of his career, one day serving as principal of his own alma mater.

But time and fate and his talents had even more in store for Reed. A prominent black teacher and principal in Wheeling for 35 years, Reed is considered to be the educator who steered Ohio County's public schools successfully through integration. Later, he was the educator who introduced Ohio County's public schools to the concept of maintaining a guidance department.

Reed was born July 16, 1914, in Luray, Va., the son of the Rev. John H. Reed and Cornelia Johnson Reed. He attended and graduated from the Lincoln Grade and High School in Wheeling and then attended and graduated from the segregated institution of Bluefield State College with specialities in English and social studies.

Returning to Wheeling, Reed became a substitute teacher at Lincoln during the 1939-40 school year. The following year, he became the upper elementary teacher for Dunbar School, the black grade school for Triadelphia. In 1943, he became Dunbar's teaching principal. In 1947, he was appointed principal of his alma mater, Lincoln School, succeeding John Henry Rainbow, who had been Lincoln's principal for 33 years.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the separate but equal interpretation of the Constitution and Ohio County Schools made the decision to proceed immediately with implementation of the ruling. According to a tribute written by Dr H. Lawrence Jones, current superintendent of Ohio County Schools, Reed "presided over the integration of his beloved Lincoln School into Wheeling's public schools and then continued to provide the county leadership and guidance in race relations through the racially turbulent 1960s and early 1970s. He provided the youth and adults of both black and white races of the community with a model of intelligence and reasoned maturity during the county's transition from a racially segregated to a fully integrated society."

When total racial integration came in 1958, desegregation applied to the staff as well as the students. Subsequent to the closing of Lincoln as a black school and its reopening as an alternative and special education institution, Reed was appointed teaching principal at Washington Grade School in North Wheeling.

"This change became for him a new challenge as he directed an all-white faculty in a school with an almost all-white student body. But working diligently with the parents of the local PTA, he successfully disabused many of the parents of their fear and actively involved them in the ongoing desegregation process. His commitment to the principles of equality and democracy became apparent when he instituted self-government techniques in his classroom and taught the students the basics of self-determination," Jones wrote of Reed.

In 1960, when President John Kennedy promoted appropriations to support creation of counseling programs in the public schools, Reed saw an opportunity to do formally what he had been doing informally for many years -counseling students and their parents. He was appointed director of guidance for Ohio County Schools and completed his graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh and Columbia University in the new profession of counseling.

As director of guidance, Reed's goals were to have a trained counselor in each school, to institute a comprehensive student record-keeping procedure, to create a testing program for grades 1-12 and to provide for individual and group counseling services for students. Upon his retirement, each of his goals has been realized except for provision for counseling services for all the elementary schools.

Principalship of Ohio County's summer school was another task Reed enjoyed immensely in part because an average of 40 students each year graduated from high school because of the availability of the summer credit program.

The committee to develop the drug education policy of the school board was headed by Reed. He also served on the Northern Panhandle Employment of the Handicapped Committee and was invited to the White House by President Richard Nixon in recognition of his work on that committee.

A bachelor, Reed retired on June 30, 1975, planning to indulge his lifelong goal of traveling. However, less than a month after he retired, he died at his home on July 24, 1975, having lived what Jones described as "a life of service, erudition, compassion and dignity."