

# Public Health Then and Now

## Dr Louis T. Wright and the NAACP: Pioneers in Hospital Racial Integration

### ABSTRACT

Louis Tompkins Wright, the son of a man born into slavery, was an outstanding African American surgeon who devoted his life to the racial integration of health care in the United States.

Despite the fact that both his father and stepfather were physicians, despite his innate intellectual gifts and disciplined character, Wright experienced discrimination throughout his life and career. This experience led him to fight for the rights of African Americans, both health care professionals and patients.

In addition to making numerous contributions in the fields of surgery and infectious disease, Wright held leadership positions in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for more than 20 years, leaving a legacy of equity for African Americans in medical education and in health care. (*Am J Public Health*. 2000;90:883–892)

*P. Preston Reynolds, MD, PhD*

In 1937, at the age of 46, Dr Louis Tompkins Wright addressed the 28th convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), speaking as chairman of the Board of Directors:

There is no use saving the Negro from being lynched, or educating for sound citizenship if he is to die prematurely as a result of murderous neglect by America's health agencies solely on account of his race or color. Fundamentally, the NAACP stands for Negroes receiving the identical health service which every other citizen of this nation enjoys. By that we mean the free, unrestricted, and identical use of every health agency afforded by municipal, state or federal government. . . .

We demand that every medical school in the country open its doors without segregation to qualified Negro students. . . . and that they be given every clinical privilege without any covert or subtle restriction. We demand their admission to every established hospital for . . . post-graduate training. We demand their appointment [to] the staffs of these institutions on the basis of merit; and we will fight every . . . device which deprives them of these opportunities because of color.<sup>1k</sup>

Dr Wright, an African American surgeon, devoted his life to the racial integration of health care in order to provide full access of opportunity to Black patients, physicians, and nurses. His quest for equity was shaped by his heritage, his personal experience with discrimination, and his innate intellect, integrity, and strength of character.

### *The Early Years: Family, Schooling, and Military Service*

#### *Family*

Both of Wright's grandfathers were White, one a prominent man for whom the town of Wrightsville, Ga, was named and the other distinguished as a judge who carried the name of Tompkins.<sup>2</sup> Louis' father, Ceah

Kentchen Wright, born into slavery, later obtained his formal education at Haven Normal School in Waynesboro, Ga. Superintendent McMahon, recognizing the aptitude of Ceah Wright, wrote to Professor Bisbee, president of Clark University in Atlanta, in 1878: "I regard [Ceah] as a young man of good moral and religious character, and a scholar of more than ordinary ability. If you can get him material aid in any way, I hope you will, as he is a deserving one."<sup>3</sup>

Leaving his family, Ceah Wright entered Clark University in Atlanta, Ga. After completing college, he furthered his professional education at Meharry Medical School, one of 2 medical schools open to African Americans in the South. At Meharry, Ceah wrote his senior honors thesis on smallpox and graduated as valedictorian in 1883.<sup>4</sup>

The graduation ceremony was a gala event, with prominent physicians and state officials among the distinguished guests. After an opening prayer, song, and salutatory address, Ceah turned to his classmates, their parents, and guests and addressed the need to persevere amid discrimination and "to withstand whatever opposition that may encounter us in the discharge of our duties to God, to humanity and our selves."<sup>5</sup>

After practicing medicine for several years, Ceah entered the ministry full-time, serving the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was in this capacity, in one of his visits to St. Mary, Ga, that he met Lula Tompkins. When they married, she was 17 and he was 38 years old. They had 2 children. The first child, Carl (birth date unknown), died at the age of

The author is with the Departments of Medicine and History, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.

Requests for reprints should be sent to P. Preston Reynolds, MD, PhD, Welch Institute for History of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University, 1900 E Monument St, Baltimore, MD 21205 (e-mail: preynold@welchlink.welch.jhu.edu).

This article was accepted February 24, 2000.

10 years of a pulmonary hemorrhage; Louis Tompkins Wright was born in 1891.<sup>6</sup>

Ceah Wright died of suspected gastric cancer only 3 years after marrying Lula. At the time of his death, he was district superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with headquarters in Atlanta. He left Lula with 2 toddlers and a home. To support them, Lula taught sewing at Thayer Home, a school for Black girls affiliated with Clark University. Clark offered elementary, high school, and college instruction. Rather than keep Louis at home, Lula placed him in Miss Hardwick's first-grade class, propelling him into formal education at the age of 4. Passing each annual examination, Louis advanced through the grades always younger than his classmates.<sup>7</sup>

When Louis was 8, Lula remarried, again to a physician, Dr William Fletcher Penn. Penn had just graduated from Yale University Medical School; he was the school's first African American student. He met Lula while touring Atlanta for the 1898 World Exposition. On completing an internship at Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, DC, William Penn returned to Atlanta, married Lula, and opened his practice of medicine and surgery.<sup>8</sup>

Education had also figured prominently in Penn's childhood. His parents moved from New Glasgow, Va, to Lynchburg, Va, to obtain better schooling for their children, enrolling William first in public schools, then at Hampton Institute, and finally at the Virginia Normal and Industrial School. Penn then entered Leonard Medical School for Blacks in Raleigh, NC. While Penn was traveling in New Haven, Conn, with a college quartet during his first summer of medical school, an influential faculty member at Yale noticed him and encouraged him to apply to the medical school. William Fletcher Penn entered Yale in 1893 and graduated in 1897, "taking high rank in all of his classes until the day of graduation."<sup>9</sup> His high academic standing was rewarded with his selection as the first African American student editor of the class yearbook.<sup>10</sup>

Louis Wright's early life reflected the advantages of being the son and stepson of professional men and of having parents who remained closely connected to Clark University. Dr William Fletcher Penn established the Mercy Hospital in Atlanta and served as superintendent and chief of the surgical service for many years. He emerged as the leading physician in south Atlanta, caring for both White and Black patients, and a distinguished African American surgeon in the South, where he conducted surgical clinics to help his colleagues develop and advance their skills.<sup>11</sup> In 1925, Dr William Fletcher Penn assumed responsibility as chief of surgery at



Source. Reprinted with permission from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Copyright 1939, NAACP.

**FIGURE 1—Dr Louis T. Wright addressing delegates and guests at the Annual Meeting of the NAACP: Richmond, Va, 1939.**

the Veterans Hospital in Tuskegee, Ala, a position he held until his death in 1934.<sup>12</sup>

Louis' stepfather influenced the young boy tremendously, embracing him as his own son. Penn was the first Black in Atlanta to own an automobile, and he invited Louis to join him when he made house calls. Louis' memories of his family's Cadillac captured the anger he would later struggle to resolve. Although the automobile was both a source of pride and a means to provide care to people throughout Atlanta, when Dr Penn drove the Cadillac through the White section of town, Whites would call out names and throw stones, and when the car needed repairs few would offer their assistance. Louis kept the car running.<sup>13</sup>

As a teenager, Louis witnessed the Atlanta riots of 1907. He was forced to defend himself and his family when his stepfather put a Winchester rifle in his hand, positioned him in the front of the house, and instructed Louis to shoot anyone who came through the front gate. Mr O'Neil, a White neighbor, rescued the family by hiding them in another

section of Atlanta to escape gunfire and the threat of being lynched.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Professional Education: Clark, Harvard, and Freedmen's Hospital*

Following in the footsteps of his father, Louis enrolled at Clark University and in 1912 graduated as valedictorian, with distinction in chemistry.<sup>15</sup> Leaving the sanctuary of Atlanta and Clark University, Louis Tompkins Wright, at his stepfather's urging, went to Boston with the goal of securing admission to Harvard Medical School. Confident in his abilities, and perhaps determined not to return home, Louis scheduled an appointment to speak with the dean, Dr Channing Frothingham. He quickly realized no one believed a student from Clark University in Atlanta could pass the entrance examinations. Frothingham sent Wright to see Dr Otto Folin, professor of biological chemistry. Wright convinced Folin to at least test his aptitude. After an oral examination, Folin called Dean Frothingham and told him Louis possessed suffi-

cient knowledge of chemistry and should join the entering class in the fall.<sup>16</sup> Arthur Turner, chemistry professor at Clark, was delighted to learn of Louis' success, and admonished him to make some advancement in his life and to give twice as much as his colleagues.<sup>17</sup>

Louis' years at Harvard Medical School were filled with good friendships with classmates, both White and Black, younger and older; great admiration for several of his professors, including Walter Cannon and Otto Folin; and a close bond with the older couple from whom he rented a room for 4 years. This easy ability to develop close personal relationships was balanced against overt discrimination from some of the faculty.

Louis walked into anatomy class the first day to find a Black male cadaver hanging in the front of the room by a pair of ice tongs inserted in the ears.<sup>18</sup> When he was called to register for clinical obstetrics, he was told that Black students did not attend to White women at the Boston Lying-In Hospital and that arrangements had been made for him with an African American obstetrician in town. Louis stated firmly that he had paid his tuition, was third in line to name his clinical rotation, and would complete his obstetrics rotation at the Boston Lying-In Hospital with his classmates.<sup>19</sup> Near the close of the obstetrics rotation, Dr Charles Green stopped Louis and said, "You know it's an amazing thing, you have had about 150 deliveries and there hasn't been a single complaint reach the hospital because of your color."<sup>20</sup> The residents so appreciated Louis' hard work and skill that they asked him to stay through the summer months. Although he declined this request, Louis knew his efforts had ensured that Black students would not again experience difficulty in completing rotations at the Boston Lying-In Hospital.

Balancing work with activism emerged as a theme that would remain dominant throughout Louis' professional life. During his third year at Harvard, the movie *Birth of a Nation*, a story about Reconstruction, opened in Boston. Louis immediately joined the picket lines protesting the movie, because it not only portrayed Blacks in subservient, imbecilic, and violent roles, it also glorified the Ku Klux Klan. After 3 weeks of demonstrations and negotiations with Mayor Curley of Boston and Governor Walsh of Massachusetts, the group of influential Black professionals and businessmen shut down the Tremont Theater. They obtained legislation to create a board of censors that would review films to prevent the showing of movies like *Birth of a Nation*. When he returned to medical school, worried about the impact of his absence, Louis ran into Dr Richard Cabot, one of his professors. To Louis' amazement, Cabot admitted he was proud to know that

Louis had picketed, because he also believed that the movie should be banned.<sup>21</sup>

Louis won the Hayden academic scholarship each year at Harvard.<sup>22</sup> On graduation day, in the company of his parents, he discovered that despite his being ranked fourth in his class, a White Jewish student from Memphis, Tenn, had blackballed Wright's nomination to Alpha Omega Alpha by the dean.<sup>23</sup> He was crushed and sought solace from his close friend Gus Hinton, who told Louis that election to Alpha Omega Alpha did not guarantee that one would become a great physician.<sup>24</sup> Again, Louis was admonished to push higher and to give more to his profession and his patients.

Working closely with Walter Cannon, Louis studied the effects of alcohol on gastric emptying and published a paper in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* in 1916.<sup>25</sup> His success in research and clinical medicine, however, did not guarantee him a surgical residency in a prestigious Boston program. He met rejection from Harvard, Peter Bent Brigham, and Boston City Hospital. He was told by Dr Harvey Cushing that under no circumstances would a Black intern be allowed to operate on or care for private patients in the surgical services of Boston's elite hospitals. Dr Charles Alan Porter, his surgery professor at Harvard, admitted that he had given Louis more opportunity as a medical student to develop his surgical skills, because he was certain Louis would not be able to secure further training after finishing at Harvard.<sup>26</sup>

After being rejected because of his color by the surgery program in Vancouver, Canada, and the pathology program at Boston City Hospital, Louis applied, at his stepfather's urging, to Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, DC.<sup>27</sup> Penn wrote to the governor of Maryland and other prominent citizens in his efforts to obtain an internship for his stepson. Louis learned of his acceptance by mail 2 weeks after taking the written examination for internship.<sup>28</sup>

At Freedmen's Hospital, Louis again distinguished himself by developing excellent surgical skills, conducting research on the Schick test for diphtheria, and refusing to abandon his vision of racial equality. Walter Van Sweringen, his surgery professor, wrote:

It gives me great pleasure to add my humble word of commendation of Dr Louis T. Wright. I personally consider him the best interne we have had at Freedmen's Hospital during my connection with the institution. . . . He spent a good deal of time in my laboratory during his internship and I found him a highly intelligent industrious worker, quiet of manner and excellent personal habits. He has a keen insight of the scientific side of medicine and anything he undertakes he will do well. . . . I feel someday we are sure to hear more of him.<sup>29</sup>

The director of the National Vaccine and Antitoxin Institute in Washington, DC, told Louis the Schick test could not be used on Blacks because the reaction could not be seen. Louis became interested in diphtheria during an outbreak of the disease and administered the Schick test to a number of his patients. He discovered that the reaction was visible (the darker the skin, the darker the skin reaction), and, furthermore, that the rate of immunity in the Black population was similar to that among Whites. He published his results in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, gaining recognition as a clinician-scientist.<sup>30</sup>

Wright stood firm when faced with discrimination as a surgical intern. He refused to march in the inaugural procession of President Woodrow Wilson, because Blacks were relegated to the back of the parade. His response to prominent hospital patients who called Louis derogatory names nearly resulted in his dismissal.<sup>31</sup> He simply was too good a surgeon, however, to be disregarded or dismissed.

### *Segregated Medicine*

In 1910 there were 3409 African American physicians in the United States, most of whom had graduated from 1 of the 7 all-Black medical schools in existence.<sup>32</sup> Abraham Flexner's report on medical education in North America, published by the Carnegie Foundation that same year, had a devastating impact on Black medical schools, resulting in the closing of 5 of the 7.<sup>33</sup> None of the 5 all-Black medical schools that were closed was adequately staffed, equipped, or supported, and all had very unsatisfactory state licensing board records. Between 1903 and 1915, 47% of the graduates of Leonard Medical School failed their state licensing examinations, as did 56% of Flint Medical College graduates, 62% of Louisville National Medical College graduates, 63% of University of West Tennessee graduates, and 69% of Knoxville Medical College graduates.<sup>34</sup>

Once these medical schools closed, only Meharry and Howard remained to educate the majority of Black health professionals. A dozen or so schools in the North admitted 1 or 2 African American applicants each year, but none of the White medical schools in the South offered such opportunities. Internships and residency positions were even more limited, and staff privileges in anything other than a poorly equipped all-Black hospital were rare to nonexistent for Black medical graduates in the South.<sup>35</sup> The American Medical Association and American Dental Association barred physicians who were not members of their state and local chapters, effectively excluding African American physi-

1. Neuton Samuel Stern, A.B.	87.25
2. Sumner Edwards, A.B.	86.75
3. Donald J. McPherson, S.B.	86.20
4. Louis Tompkins Wright, A.B.	84.59
5. Henry Anton Durkin, A.B.	84.55
6. Lawson Gentry Lowery, A.M.	84.51
7. George Francis Dwinell, A.B.	83.59
8. Langdon Thomas Thaxter, A.B.	83.55
9. Horace Kennedy Sowles, A.B.	83.57
10. James Blaine Montgomery, A.B.	82.92
11. Paul Appleton, Ph.B.	82.76
12. DeWayne Townsend, A.B.	82.57
13. Edward Nelson Cleaves, A.B.	82.51
14. Sing Lim, S.B.	82.20
15. Arthur Morrison Jackson, S.B.	82.22
16. Freeman Pell Clason, A.B.	82.06
17. Gustave Phillip Grubfield, A.B.	81.57
18. Harold Martin Frost, A.B.	81.55
19. Arlie Vernon Book, A.B.	80.82
20. Martin Peck, S.B.	80.78

Marks of the "Cum Laude" Graduates  
Harvard Medical School 1915.

Source. Reprinted with permission from the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston, Mass.

**FIGURE 2—Scholastic ranking of “Cum Laude” graduates: Harvard Medical School, 1915.**

cians in the 17 southern states.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, Black physicians practicing in the South found themselves increasingly isolated from the mainstream of their profession.

There were 3 patterns of providing hospital services to Black patients in the South. The all-Black hospital was built exclusively for Black patients. The physicians and nurses in many of these hospitals were White; in others they were biracial or Black. The mixed-race hospitals were of 2 types. The predominant type segregated Blacks in separate wards, such as all-Black wings and basement and attic wards. The other type was separate buildings attached to the main hospital, or separate buildings located on the

hospital grounds. Generally, in mixed-race hospitals, only White physicians and nurses were admitted to the professional staffs. In rare cases, Black physicians continued to care for their hospitalized patients; however, they were limited to the Black wards. In all-White hospitals, which predominated in the South, Blacks were refused admission in all but the most extreme emergency situations.<sup>37</sup>

Freedmen’s Hospital was one of a handful of hospitals where African Americans could obtain postgraduate training, which in 1915 was limited to a 1-year rotating internship. After completing his internship, Louis joined his stepfather to help him financially, and, back in his hometown, he quickly built up

a large clinical practice. He scored the highest marks in the state medical licensing examinations in Georgia and Maryland and scored in the top decile (93.4%) in New York State. His Harvard fraternity brothers wrote to Louis, congratulating him on his early career success and predicting greater accomplishments.<sup>38</sup>

During Louis’ first year in practice, James Weldon Johnson, field secretary of the NAACP, came to Atlanta to organize a local chapter. Walter White, then working for the Standard Life Insurance Company, was elected secretary; Louis became treasurer.<sup>39</sup> Thus began a lifelong friendship between White and Wright and involvement for both in the NAACP. But Louis was not to remain in Atlanta long. He simply could not tolerate the overt discrimination against him, his family, and his colleagues that he encountered daily in the South.

### *Military Service*

When the United States declared war against Germany, Wright enlisted in the Army. He passed the entrance examination with ease, securing the initial rank of first lieutenant in the Medical Reserve Corps.<sup>40</sup> Assigned to the 367th Infantry of the 92nd Division, Wright reported to Camp Upton on Long Island, NY, where he met his future wife. In 1918 he sailed to Brest, then to Corre, and then to St. Die, France. On the front lines, the Germans dropped a gas shell 20 feet from his battalion aid station, gassing 1200 men with phosgene. Wright was evacuated from the mountain. After discharge from the hospital at Raon l’Etape, he was sent to the main triage hospital for the 92nd Division (consisting of the 366th, 367th, and 368th regiments) and put in charge of all the surgical wards. There he worked side by side with White physicians and nurses. His excellent surgical and medical skills earned him a promotion. At the close of the war, with a Purple Heart and the rank of captain, Wright sailed home to New York City.<sup>41</sup>

### *A Commitment to Excellence and Equity*

Dr Louis T. Wright was a leader not only in the field of surgery but in the work of the NAACP. His early experience with overt discrimination flamed his passion for equity and justice in all aspects of life, but particularly in the area of professional education and medical care. His leadership of Harlem Hospital enabled the institution to serve as a model for the racial integration of professional staffs and teaching programs; his leadership of the NAACP pushed the or-

ganization to the forefront in the fight for racial integration of health care.

### *Harlem Hospital*

Wright married Corinne M. Cooke, a resident of New York City, in 1918, one month before leaving for France to fight in World War I. On his return after the war, he found employment in the venereal disease clinic in the New York City Health Department.<sup>42</sup> He immediately applied for staff privileges at Harlem Hospital, and after 6 months of waiting he called Dr Cosmo O'Neal, superintendent of the hospital, to inquire about a position. Familiar with Wright's war record and his clinical research, O'Neal offered him an entry-level position working in the women's outpatient clinic. When Louis arrived on his first day, 4 physicians quit in protest, and O'Neal found himself transferred to the gate-booth at Bellevue Hospital to direct ambulance traffic.

In 1919, Dr Louis T. Wright became the first African American physician to be given a staff position in a municipal hospital in New York City. Within several months of Wright's appointment, 4 more African American physicians obtained entry-level positions. Two years later, all 5 were proposed for positions as attending physicians on the surgical ward service.<sup>43</sup> Their applications were rejected, however, by the Board of Directors of Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, which oversaw the clinical services at Harlem Hospital. Citizens' committees demanded that Mayor Hylan investigate the discriminatory practices of Bellevue Hospital's Board of Directors. The investigation and public hearings stirred such indignation that the chairman of the board was replaced by a man who welcomed qualified applicants regardless of race.

Dr O'Neal was rescued from Bellevue's ambulance yard and made deputy superintendent of Fordham Hospital, and the 5 African American physicians were promoted. Louis advanced again, to the rank of assistant visiting surgeon, in 1928.<sup>44</sup> The following year he became the first African American surgeon hired by the New York City Police Department, having scored the second-highest mark in his group on the rigorous civil service examination.<sup>45</sup> This career advancement was heralded throughout the Black community as a major accomplishment for Black professionals. Wright would rotate with New York's leading surgeons, he would be responsible for the medical care of White policemen and the staff of the City Police Department, and he would be paid for this coveted honor.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, Louis Wright engaged in full-time private practice in Harlem while working closely with

Dr John Fox Connors, a robust Irishman who rose to the position of chief of the Department of Surgery at Harlem Hospital. Wright helped establish a nursing school at Harlem Hospital that admitted qualified African American students. The school opened in 1923 and became increasingly active throughout the 1920s. Wright sought to create a residency program in surgery and to open all postgraduate training programs in the hospital to qualified African American applicants. Wright succeeded with the appointment of 3 Black interns to the surgical residency in 1926, but his success generated opposition to his potential appointment as chief when Connors died in 1935. The hospital commissioner decided instead to rotate the position among the senior surgeons every 2 years.<sup>47</sup>

One year after Wright assumed the title in 1938, he was struck with severe cavitating pulmonary tuberculosis of the right lung, requiring 6 months of hospitalization in Bellevue, 2 years at Biggs Memorial Hospital in Ithaca, NY, and 6 months of convalescence at home.<sup>48</sup> After 3 years in treatment and convalescence, in 1943 Wright returned to work at Harlem Hospital, where he was unanimously elected chief of surgery, a position he held until his death. Wright felt lucky to have survived, given that 50% of his classmates at Clark University had died of tuberculosis.<sup>49</sup> He fought for better health care, better jobs, and better education for his people, because he knew one could not separate poor health from the economic disparities that plagued African Americans.

Wright envisioned strengthening the health of African American citizens and creating professional opportunities for African American physicians and nurses through the racial integration of existing private and municipal hospitals that were staffed exclusively by White doctors and nurses. His efforts succeeded locally, so that by 1946, more than 25% of Harlem Hospital's medical and surgical staff were of African American descent, and all the residency programs were open to qualified applicants regardless of race, color, or national origin.<sup>50</sup>

### *"Separate but Equal": Wright's Work With the NAACP*

Nationally, most experts estimated a need for 1 physician to every 750 Americans; however, in 1947 the ratio of African American physicians to African American citizens was 1 to 3377. The range by states was from a ratio of 1 to 1002 in Missouri to a ratio of 1 to 18527 in Mississippi. Of the 112 all-Black hospitals in the United States, only 25 were accredited by the American College of Surgeons, and 14 were approved for the

training of interns.<sup>51</sup> Throughout the country, an estimated 15 000 hospital beds out of 1.5 million were available for Black patients; in some areas of the country, the ratio was 75 beds per 1 million African Americans, clearly below the target of 4.5 beds per 1000 population.<sup>52</sup>

A survey of 17 states and the District of Columbia showed that an average of 12 times as much money was spent on education for Whites as on education for Blacks; the ratio ranged from 3:1 in the District of Columbia to 42:1 in the state of Kentucky. All 26 medical schools located in the South, with the exception of Meharry Medical College, refused admission to African American students. This left 52 medical schools in the North, along with Meharry and Howard, available to African American applicants; nevertheless, out of a total of 590 African American medical students throughout the country, only 82 students attended schools other than Howard and Meharry.<sup>53</sup>

The impact on African Americans of "separate but equal" education in medicine was devastating. It was evident both in the number of hospitals available for internship and residency training and in the number of African American physicians who obtained board specialty certification. Eighty-five of the 116 residency positions available to African Americans throughout the country were located in 8 all-Black hospitals, of which 4 institutions together provided 75 slots: Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, DC (27), Homer G. Philips Hospital in St. Louis, Mo (30), Provident Hospital in Chicago, Ill (9), and Hubbard Hospital in Nashville, Tenn (9). Of the 4000 African American physicians in the United States in 1946, only 93 were board certified in a medical (49) or surgical (44) specialty. Of these 93 physicians, 42 were graduates of Meharry or Howard, and 48 had graduated from other North American medical schools. Eighty percent of these specialists established their clinical practices in the North.<sup>54</sup>

To build support for an integrationist strategy, Wright, with other physicians—both White and Black—from Harlem Hospital, founded the Manhattan Medical Society in 1930. One of the first acts of the Manhattan Medical Society was to oppose construction of a Jim Crow all-Black hospital in New York City with funds from the Julius Rosenwald Fund.<sup>55</sup> Wright personally battled the Rosenwald Fund for much of his professional life in the NAACP, believing that any expansion of "separate but equal" policy, even through the Black hospital movement, only deepened the color line of segregation. Accordingly, in the early years he tested in the Manhattan Medical Society many of the policies he would



Source. Reprinted with permission from the National Medical Association. Copyright 1953, *Journal of the National Medical Association*.

**FIGURE 3—Dr Louis T. Wright in his office-study at home: Harlem, NY, 1948.**

later push in the NAACP, giving him larger professional and political bases of power.

Wright joined the board of directors of the NAACP in 1931 with the goal of racially integrating health care. Two years later during the annual NAACP meeting, Theodore Berry, president of the Cincinnati chapter, discussed his efforts to oppose construction of an all-Black hospital in his home city.<sup>56</sup> In 1934, Wright was elected chairman of the NAACP national board of directors.<sup>57</sup> Although clinical duties prevented him from attending the annual meeting that year, in 1936 he addressed the 27th convention delegates with his first account of the association's activities. He focused on the NAACP's strategy to eliminate lynching by securing federal legislation that would make lynching a crime: 25 lynchings had occurred that year alone. Wright discussed efforts to improve jobs and education for African Americans through litigation, highlighting suits filed by Thurgood Marshall and his team of lawyers to obtain access to higher education in Maryland, Missouri, and Tennessee. He ended his summary with a discussion of the NAACP's fight against discrimination in health care, saying, "This Association stands shoulder to shoulder with and squarely behind the ideals of the Manhattan Medical Society—that vigorous and hard hitting foe of segregation, . . . to that

end that Negro patients, doctors and nurses will receive the identical care, treatment and training as that afforded any citizen."<sup>58</sup>

At the 28th NAACP annual convention, held in Detroit in 1937, Wright again attacked discrimination in health care. He declared that segregated institutions often provided second-rate training for African American doctors and second-rate treatment of patients. This was "not because of any inherent lack [of potential], but because it was the common experience that 'equal but separate' institutions are separate, but not equal." He reported that the NAACP board of directors had agreed on 3 principles:

1. Negro doctors are entitled to, and should, build hospitals for treatment of private patients. These should provide efficient care and should give the doctors the monetary gains to which they are entitled.
2. These hospitals should never be larger than the Negro community can support and staff efficiently. This efficiency must be outstanding, not just usual.
3. Negroes should not build segregated hospitals which are large enough to be used as training areas of Negro doctors. There is a pathologic over-simplification of the problem, when Negro doctors must all be trained in one center. Opportunities become limited, and ideals become narrowed.<sup>59</sup>

That year the convention delegates agreed to a national program to end discrimi-

nation in health care. The NAACP pledged to undertake an active and sustained fight to make available the facilities of each hospital, medical school, and health agency through direct political action and aroused public opinion, so that identical opportunities in medical services would be furnished to all citizens. In the spring of 1939, the national office surveyed the branch chapters to determine their level of activity in the area of health. Forty-two of the 85 chapters that responded had done something to establish just and equitable conditions in the health field: 30 had worked on enforcement of existing sanitation laws, 26 on improving health facilities, 17 on integrating African American doctors and nurses into local health programs, and 8 on opening up new training opportunities for health professionals.<sup>60</sup>

Wright's determination to raise the quality of residency training and medical care for Black professionals and patients earned him the Spingarn Medal in 1940.<sup>61</sup> As chairman of the NAACP board of directors, he led the organization's push for equity in medicine. The NAACP leadership monitored closely the reemergence of Jim Crow policies following the end of World War II and lobbied for national health insurance legislation because of its beneficial impact on access to medical care, particularly for African Americans. Wright testified in 1945 on the proposed Hill-Burton Hospital Survey and Construction Act. This legislation called on states to develop a plan to build hospitals to ensure access to health services for all. Federal funds would be made available to help a community construct a hospital, if it would be open to both Black and White patients or if the community could demonstrate that equitable facilities were provided for both races. While Wright supported in principle the Hospital Survey and Construction Act, he argued that the legislation should be changed to prevent further expression of "separate but equal" policies in medicine through the use of federal funds to enlarge a system of segregated hospitals.<sup>62</sup>

Wright was adamant that the NAACP refuse to support segregation and discrimination in all forms. Following World War II, the organization again actively opposed the construction of Jim Crow all-Black hospitals with private, public, and Veterans Administration (VA) funding in communities in the North and South, and it threatened to revoke the charter of any NAACP chapter that supported the building of such institutions.<sup>63</sup> The local chapter in Mound Bayou, Miss, withdrew its support for construction of an all-Black Veterans Affairs hospital in its town when the national office pressed its demands.<sup>64</sup> The organization prevented further

growth of segregated hospital care in New York City, Cleveland, Ohio, and Washington, DC, but it failed in its efforts to block expansion of all-Black hospital facilities in Atlanta, Ga, and to prevent the change in staffing of Provident Hospital in Chicago, Ill, from exclusively White to nearly all Black.<sup>65</sup>

To broaden the support for an integrationist agenda, Wright formed the NAACP National Medical Committee in 1944 and invited distinguished White physicians he regarded as colleagues and friends to serve as members. Russell L. Cecil of Cornell, Walter Cannon of Harvard, and John P. Peters of Yale lent their names and support. Again, Wright's activism merged with his professional responsibility as a physician to improve the quality of medical care. The group endorsed 4 principles: (1) that the country's health is and can be no better proportionately than that of the most neglected health segment of its population; (2) that public or private medical care must be based on per unit of need at any given time or place; (3) that equality of and justice in public and private medical care should be guaranteed to all people; and (4) that unrestricted participation in policy-making deliberations by responsible organizations or governments relative to health is essential to future progress.

The National Medical Committee, similar to the NAACP National Legal Committee, was charged to provide expert advice to be used "in such a manner that the Association's work in the health area will become established on a national basis as a coordinated and integral part of the Association's total activities." The NAACP asked the National Medical Committee to undertake separate studies describing discriminatory practices in medical education, hospitals, and health services; medical publicity detrimental to any racial group; and correction of scientific misinformation that tended to increase the un-American practice of segregation or denial of health opportunities to Black patients, nurses, or doctors. Furthermore, the committee was charged to hire a graduate of medicine to assist in carrying out its mission.<sup>66</sup>

W. Montague Cobb, professor of anatomy at Howard University, was commissioned by Wright and the NAACP National Medical Committee to conduct a comprehensive study of hospital and medical care accessible to African Americans.<sup>67</sup> This landmark 2-part study secured for Wright, Cobb, and the NAACP central leadership roles in pioneering the racial integration of health care in the United States.<sup>68</sup>

Cobb's first report, *Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro*, published as a pamphlet and again in the NAACP's *The Crisis*, detailed the Black medical ghetto, which

consisted of Meharry and Howard medical schools along with 10 all-Black hospitals and 10 additional hospitals in the North and West where most African American physicians received their training. Cobb argued that these 2 medical schools and 20 hospitals determined the quality of the medical care patients received from their physicians.

Cobb went on to describe the pattern of "old clothes to Sam," in which Whites gave their worn-out hospital facilities to Blacks when Blacks moved into an area as Whites exited to other parts of the city. Private and public institutions alike resisted the abandonment of segregationist practices, including even the VA system, with its established legal provisions prescribing that medical care for veterans should be without discrimination. Of the 127 VA hospitals, 24 had separate wards for Black patients, and all of the 19 VA hospitals in the South—with the exception of a separate all-Black VA hospital that existed in Tuskegee, Ala—refused admission to Blacks except in emergencies.

Like Wright before him, Cobb argued that this "separate but equal" system of all-Black hospitals would never equal its White counterpart in size or quality and, as a consequence, African American health professionals would fall further behind their White colleagues. He agreed with Wright that the integrationist strategy offered the best chance for improved health outcomes for African American patients and professional development for African American professionals.

The National Medical Committee designed a comprehensive national health program and built consensus for the racial integration of health care among African American professionals. It provided critical leadership in developing NAACP policies that later became core elements of the President's Civil Rights Commission report *To Secure These Rights*. President Truman created the Civil Rights Commission, in part, as a response to a meeting on mob violence and lynching called in 1946 by Walter White, executive director of the NAACP.<sup>69</sup> The commission worked with data supplied to its members by the NAACP, gathered with input from the local chapters. The final language of the report was drawn directly from NAACP materials and included key principles of the NAACP, such as the prohibition against the use of federal funds to finance the operation, construction, or expansion of "separate but equal" institutions, including hospitals. The report called for elimination of discrimination against minorities in medical school admission policies and in postgraduate internship and residency training, and the opening of all hospitals to American citizens regardless of race.<sup>70</sup>

## Physician and Visionary

Wright would not give up or give in until discrimination ended. He was honored throughout his life both for his efforts in passionate pursuit of his integrationist vision and for his skills and accomplishments as a surgeon and educator. He was elected a fellow of the American College of Surgeons in 1934, becoming the second African American member since the founding of the organization in 1913. He was board certified in surgery in 1939, one year after the American Board of Surgery was created.<sup>71</sup> He was elected honorary fellow of the International College of Surgeons in 1950. In 1952, more than 1100 guests joined Wright in celebrating the establishment of the Louis Tompkins Wright Library at Harlem Hospital.<sup>72</sup> Reflecting on this memorable event, Aubrey Maynard—who in 1926 had been the first African American surgical intern at Harlem Hospital and who later joined the hospital staff—wrote that every guest had a special rapport with Wright, because they had come to identify personally with his life, his struggles, and his dreams.

Like some of his era, [Wright] had viewed with cold horror the scene of a lynching. He had known the surging fury of defiance when a mob moved toward his home and family. From boyhood he had felt the spur and the obligation to gain educational and professional status to fulfill the aspirations of devoted parents. He had been a black soldier in a white man's army which fostered segregation and seethed with prejudice and injustice. Through the depression he had struggled to support his family as a doctor in the ghetto. Physical disability had eroded his strength. He had learned the promises and evasions and maneuvers—and occasionally the successes—of political life in a racist society. Step by step, he had gained professional and personal stature. Now at his celebration of this sixtieth birthday, he cherished the hope that untold thousands would pass to fulfilled lives through the doors that he had opened. His friends, who remembered the long years rejoiced with him.<sup>73</sup>

Wright had always dreamed of a great library for the hospital, because he knew that scientific discoveries rested on an investigator's easy access to the published literature and opportunities for research.<sup>74</sup> When he returned to Harlem Hospital in 1943 after his bout with tuberculosis, although he was no longer incapacitated, he was physically unable to endure an active schedule of surgery, teaching, and administration. He turned his attention to building the institution's research program, and in so doing sustained his own lifelong accomplishments of discovery in surgery and medicine. In the field of surgery, Wright devised a brace for transportation of

patients with broken necks, and he held a patent for a blade plate for fractures of the knee joint. He described for the first time a rare fracture of the neck of the femur, called now the “oblique subcervical fracture of the femur.” He undertook a comprehensive review of the treatment of skull fractures and wrote the definitive chapter on the subject in Scudder’s textbook *Treatment of Fractures*.<sup>75</sup>

In the area of infectious disease, Wright introduced intradermal vaccination for smallpox when he was stationed at Camp Upton on Long Island, proved the effectiveness of the Schick test for diphtheria in African Americans, and established himself and his colleagues at Harlem Hospital as experts in the treatment of lymphogranuloma inguinale. Wright was the first to use aureomycin in a human, demonstrating its use in the treatment of lymphogranuloma inguinale and other infectious conditions. His publications in this area alone totaled more than 25.<sup>76</sup> In fact, he was nominated for a World Health Organization committee because of his expertise in infectious diseases.<sup>77</sup>

With grants from the Public Health Service, Wright undertook clinical investigation in the treatment of cancer with chemotherapeutic agents, including triethylene melamine and folic acid antagonists. In 1952, Wright wrote to a colleague that his team of investigators was able to produce changes in cancer that had not been possible just 5 years earlier.<sup>78</sup> Wright, who published 100 peer-reviewed scientific articles during his career, reflected that he had spent many years training interns and residents in surgery, teaching them research techniques, critical judgment, and objectivity in scientific investigation—a legacy that would live for generations. He knew that these men and women left the hospital well trained in the methodology required for clinical and scientific investigation.

Louis Tompkins Wright died in 1952, six months after the dedication dinner for the Wright Library. His death was mourned by leading citizens, White and Black, throughout the world, as well as his close circle of friends, patients, and colleagues.<sup>79</sup> Posthumously, he was awarded the American Cancer Society Medal in 1953.<sup>80</sup> The campaign to racially integrate hospitals and medical schools would be carried forward by the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, culminating in the landmark *Simkins* decision in 1963. Dr Montague Cobb became chair of the NAACP Health Committee, and he created a powerful collaboration between the NAACP, the National Medical Association, and the National Urban League that aggressively pushed hospital integration under Medicare in 1966.<sup>81</sup>

Ten years after Wright’s death, Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, de-

livered the last of a series of Louis Tompkins Wright lectures at Harlem Hospital. His speech, unlike previous lectures in the series, focused on Louis Tompkins Wright, the visionary who dared to dream that equity in medicine could become a reality. To an audience packed with family members, community and civic representatives, and out-of-town guests, Roy Wilkins brought to life his portrait of Wright. He praised Wright’s indomitable philosophy and claimed that “some of the mightiest blows for equality, those aimed at the shackling doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ were struck by the NAACP under his leadership.”<sup>82</sup> It was the firm belief of Dr Louis Tompkins Wright that equity in medical care would strengthen the health of all Americans, not only those of African American heritage. Wright’s personal experience with discrimination, despite his innate intellectual gifts, disciplined character, and a family that reinforced a commitment to excellence, propelled him into a life of leadership in order to serve those most in need. □

## Acknowledgments

This research was supported by grants from the Charles E. Culpeper Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health/National Library of Medicine (R01-LM06617-01A1).

I would like to extend special thanks to the staff of the manuscript collection of the Library of Congress, the archival staff at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, the staff of the manuscript and rare book collection of the Countway Library of Harvard University, the archival staff of the Robert Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center, and Ed Morman at the New York Academy of Medicine.

## Endnotes

1. L. T. Wright, address for the 28th NAACP annual convention (1937), 3, box 130-6, folder 19, Louis T. Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.
2. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 1, 2, box 130-1, folder 12, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
3. C. W. McMahon to Professor K. E. Bisbee, 7 November 1878, box 1, file 1, folder: Wright, Ceah Kentchen, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
4. C. K. Wright, Meharry Medical College valedictorian address, box 1, file 1, folder: Wright, Ceah Kentchen, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
5. *Ibid.*
6. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 2, 3.
7. *Ibid.*, 3; J.P. Brawley, *The Clark College Legacy: An Interpretative History of Relevant Education, 1869–1975* (Atlanta, Ga: Clark College, 1977), 1–63.
8. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 3.
9. Biographical clipping, box 1, file 2, folder: William Fletcher Penn, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.

10. Biographical clipping, box 1, file 4, folder: William Fletcher Penn, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
11. Biographical clipping, box 1, file 2, folder: William Fletcher Penn, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
12. *Ibid.*
13. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 9.
14. *Ibid.*, 9, 10; A. del Maynard, *Surgeons for the Poor* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1978), 97.
15. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 13.
16. *Ibid.*, 10, 11, 13.
17. J. Arthur Turner to “Dear Louis,” 24 June 1911, box 5, folder 77, Wright Papers, Countway Library, Harvard University.
18. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 16–32.
19. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 23; W.M. Cobb, “Louis Tompkins Wright, 1891–1952,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 45 (1953): 130–148; R. Wilkins, “Louis T. Wright: Fighter for Equality and Excellence,” *The Crisis*, May 1963, 261–269.
20. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 25.
21. *Ibid.*, 44–46; A. del Maynard, *Surgeons for the Poor*; 97; Wilkins, “Fighter for Equality and Excellence.”
22. E. H. Bradford, dean, to Mr I. Garland Penn, 14 September 1916, box 5, folder 80, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
23. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 43, 44, 46, 55; A. del Maynard, *Surgeons for the Poor*, 96; Andrew Weinberger to W. Montague Cobb, 14 April 1953; W. Montague Cobb to Andrew D. Weinberger, 16 April 1953, NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, file: Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright, Death of, 1952, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
24. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 55.
25. L. T. Wright, “The Effect of Alcohol in the Rate of Discharge From the Stomach,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 175 (1916): 627–629.
26. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 32, 33.
27. L. T. Wright to Commissioner S. McKenney, Fair Employment Practice Commission, 4 June 1947, box 5, folder 91; Malcolm T. MacEachern to Louis T. Wright, 15 April 1915, box 5, folder 79, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
28. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 57.
29. Walter Van Sweringen to Mr Garland Penn, 8 September 1916, box 5, folder 80, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
30. L. T. Wright, “The Schick Test: With Especial Reference to the Negro,” *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 21 (1917): 265–268.
31. “Dr Louis T. Wright, Fought for Rights,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 25 April 1953, box 7, folder 121, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
32. W.M. Cobb, “Progress and Portents for the Negro in Medicine,” *The Crisis*, April 1948, 107–122; see statistics, 108.
33. A. Flexner, “The Medical Education of the Negro,” in *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (Boston, Mass: The Merrymount Press, 1910), 180–181.
34. W.M. Cobb, “Progress and Portents for the Negro in Medicine,” statistics, 109.
35. W.M. Cobb, *Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro* (New York, NY: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, August 1947), 1–39; E. H. L. Corwin and G.E. Sturges,

- Opportunities for the Medical Education of Negroes* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1936), 1–14; G. Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1944, reissued 1962), 322–325, 635.
36. W.M. Cobb, *Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro*, 32–33.
  37. Ray Springle story no. 15, “A Marble Monument to Cruelty,” NAACP group II, box 73, General Office File, file: Articles, Springle, Ray, “In the Land of Jim Crow, 1948,” Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; reports from studies of basic civil rights for negroes (1935), box 8, folder 138, Wright Papers, Countway Library; Corwin and Sturges, *Opportunities*, 1–14; Myrdal, *American Dilemma*, 169, 635–636, 795–796; P.P. Reynolds, “Hospitals and Civil Rights, 1945–1963: The Case of *Simkins v. Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital*,” *Annals of Internal Medicine* 126 (1997): 898–906; P.P. Reynolds, “The Federal Government’s Use of Title VI and Medicare to Racially Integrate Hospitals in the United States, 1963 Through 1965,” *American Journal of Public Health* 87 (1997): 1850–1858.
  38. The University of the State of New York, 5 November 1915, box 5, folder 79; Joseph S. Forrester, Jr, Sec’y of medical school fraternity, to “Dear Brother,” 21 February 1916, box 5, folder 80, Wright Papers, Countway Library; F. Kingdom, “Patriot and Physician,” *The Crisis*, January 1940, 14, 15, 27.
  39. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 68–72; remarks by Louis T. Wright at the dedication of the Louis Tompkins Wright Library of Harlem Hospital, 30 April 1952, NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—General, May 1950–1952, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; Wilkins, “Fighter for Equality and Excellence.”
  40. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 74; L. T. Wright, *The Crisis*, December 1919, 65.
  41. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 74–92; “Honors: Louis T. Wright,” *Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin* 26 (1952): 143–145, biographical file: Wright, Louis T., Robert W. Woodruff Archives and Special Collections, Atlanta University Center; F. Kingdom, “Patriot and Physician,” 14–15, 27; A. del Maynard, *Surgeons for the Poor*, 5, 97.
  42. L. T. Wright, *The Crisis*, December 1919, 65; L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 92, 93.
  43. “Honors: Louis T. Wright”; L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 92–94; T. Edwards and M. Gitlin, “Surgeon for Democracy,” *Coronet*, April 1946, 118–120; A. del Maynard, *Surgeons for the Poor*, 18–22.
  44. Edwards and Gitlin, “Surgeon for Democracy.”
  45. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 96; Edwards and Gitlin, “Surgeon for Democracy”; A. del Maynard, *Surgeons for the Poor*, 98; score card for civil service examination, box 6, folder 106, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
  46. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 96; “1st Refused Seat Then Appointed as Police Surgeon—Wanted Until 1/29,” memorandum for Mr Arthur B. Spingarn, presiding, June 29, NAACP group I, box B12, Annual Conference File, Baltimore, 25 June 1929, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
  47. A. del Maynard, draft text, file: Louis T. Wright—Miscellaneous, A. del Maynard Papers, New York Academy of Medicine; A. del Maynard, “Internship and Houseship,” in *Surgeons for the Poor*, 22, 40–55, 94; L. T. Wright, remarks at the dedication of the Louis T. Wright Library of Harlem Hospital, NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—General, 1945–1947, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; L. T. Wright, remarks at the Louis T. Wright Testimonial Dinner of the Harlem Surgical Society, 28 November 1946, NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—General, 1945–1947, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; L. T. Wright, “Memorandum, Graduate Training in Surgery—Tentative Plan,” box 4, folder 61, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
  48. Louis T. Wright to Hon F. H. LaGuardia, 19 June 1942, box 130-1, folder 24, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center; A. del Maynard, draft text; Charles J. Dillon, chief surgeon, “Memorandum for the Police Commissioner,” 25 June 1942, box 130-1, folder 24, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center; J. Burns Simberson, Jr, MD, visiting surgeon in charge, Bellevue Hospital Tuberculosis Service, 16 April 1941, “To Whom It May Concern,” box 6, folder 112, Wright Papers, Countway Library; memorandums and correspondence to and from Louis T. Wright and the NAACP staff, 1940–1944, NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—General, 1940–1944, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
  49. L. T. Wright, “I Remember,” 36.
  50. Edwards and Gitlin, “Surgeon for Democracy”; L. T. Wright, address for the 28th NAACP annual convention.
  51. W.M. Cobb, *Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro*, 5–6; digest of the report of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights* (Chicago, Ill: American Council on Race Relations, 1947), NAACP group II, box A482, General Office File, President’s Committee on Civil Rights, “Statements, Reports, and Press Releases,” Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
  52. L. B. Wheildon, “Negro Segregation,” *Editorial Research Reports* 3 (1947): 826, NAACP group II, box A481, General Office File, President’s Commission on Civil Rights, Correspondence, General, November–December 1947, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
  53. W.M. Cobb, “Progress and Portents for the Negro in Medicine,” tables, 125, 126; statistics, 116.
  54. W.M. Cobb, *Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro*, 16–19; see tables 3, 5, and 7.
  55. “The Manhattan Medical Society,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 214 (1936): 434–435; “Doctors Who Resigned From North Harlem,” *New York Age*, 31 May 1930, box 7, folder 117; L. T. Wright, “Health Problems of the Negro,” *Interracial Review*, January 1935, 5–8; position of the Manhattan Medical Society on Harlem Hospital and position of the Manhattan Medical Society on Segregation, box 4, folder 61; list of physicians who resigned from North Harlem Medical Society and “North Harlem Medical Society Repudiated,” box 4, folder 70; “Pamphlet No. 3: Past, Present and Future Activities of the Manhattan Medical Society,” approved by the society on 2 October 1935, box 3, folder 55; “Charitable Segregation: The Julius Rosenwald Fund Not Wanted by Colored New Yorkers,” *The Fraternal Review*, 10 January 1931, 1–2; memorandum on the Julius Rosenwald Fund, box 3, folder 52; “Doctors Protest ‘Jim Crow’ Hospital,” box 3, folder 52; Louis T. Wright to Dr H. L. Harris, Jr, box 3, folder 51, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
  56. “Rosenwald Fund and Negro Hospitals,” minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors of the NAACP, 9 March 1931, box 4, folder 56, Wright Papers, Countway Library; Walter White to Mr Theodore Berry, president, Cincinnati Branch, 5 June 1933, NAACP group I, box B9, Annual Conference File, Chicago, June 5–7, 1933.
  57. Memorandums and clippings, NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis Wright—Death of, 1952; Wilkins, “Fighter for Equality and Excellence”; memorandum for Mr Arthur B. Spingarn, presiding, June 29, NAACP group I, box B12, Annual Conference File, Baltimore, June 25, 1936.
  58. L. T. Wright, “The 26th Year of the NAACP,” *The Crisis*, August 1936, 244, 245, 251.
  59. L. T. Wright, address for the 28th NAACP annual convention, 13–14; resolutions adopted by the 28th Annual Conference of the NAACP, 29 June–4 July 1937, NAACP group I, box B13, Annual Conference File, Speeches May–June 1937; press release, “Jim Crow in Health Called ‘Murderous,’” NAACP group I, box B14, Annual Conference File, July 1–7, 1937.
  60. L. T. Wright, address for the 30th NAACP annual convention (1939), 2, box 130-6, folder 24, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
  61. “Honors: Louis T. Wright”; Louis T. Wright, winner of Spingarn Medal for 1940, 26 January 1940, NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—General, 1940–1944, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; L. T. Wright, acceptance speech, 19 June 1940, box 130-6, folder 22, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
  62. L. T. Wright, testimony: “Statement re: Senate Bill 191,” 19 March 1945, *Congressional Record*, 12 July 1945, A3680–A3681; statement of Louis T. Wright, chairman, Board of Directors, NAACP, submitted to the Senate Education and Labor Committee in support of S 191, 23 March 1945, box 130-6, folder 23, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
  63. “Fight Against Jim Crow,” Louis T. Wright to Dr Lattimore, 1 February 1948; memorandum, “The Atlanta Plan,” NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—General, 1948–1949, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; memorandum on the Julius Rosenwald Fund; memorandum of the Board of Directors of NAACP re opposition to Julius Rosenwald Fund Hospital in New York City, 27 January 1931, box 3, folder 52; Louis T. Wright to Dr H. L. Harris, Jr, 29 December 1930, box 3, folder 51, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
  64. Roy Wilkins to Dr Cook, 25 April 1947, box 4, folder 61; Roy Wilkins to Dr Louis T. Wright, 29 April 1947, box 4, folder 61; Louis T. Wright to Walter White, 18 March 1948, box 4, folder 61; “Position Statement of the Manhattan Medical Society on Segregation,” box 4, folder 61; Louis T. Wright to Roy Wilkins, 30 April 1947, box 4, folder 61, Wright Papers, Countway Library.

65. Cleveland: Louis T. Wright to Dr James A. Owen, 7 December 1929, and Louis T. Wright to Dr James A. Owen, 17 December 1929, box 5, folder 83, Wright Papers, Countway Library; W. M. Cobb to Dr Louis T. Wright, 16 July 1946, NAACP group II, box A303, General Office File, Health and Hospitals, 1944–1946, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
- Atlanta: Louis T. Wright to Walter White; materials and memorandums on Atlanta, NAACP group II, box A303, General Office File, Health and Hospitals, 1948–1949; L. T. Wright, address delivered at the 43rd annual convention of the NAACP (25 June 1952), NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—General, 1952–1953, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; Louis T. Wright to Walter White, 18 March 1948, re: Atlanta hospital plans, box 4, folder 61, Wright Papers, Countway Library; Atlanta Urban League Papers, 1920–1990, Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center; administration files 1943–1961, boxes 37–40, files on Atlanta Hospital Survey and the construction of the Hughes Spaulding Pavilion, Robert Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center.
- Mound Bayou: L. T. Wright, address delivered at 43rd NAACP annual convention; Roy Wilkins to Dr Cook, 25 April 1947; Louis T. Wright to “Dear Roy,” 30 April 1947, box 4, folder 61, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
- New York: see notes 55 and 63.
- Washington, DC: Louis T. Wright to “Dear Monty,” 13 November 1946, box 4, folder 61, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
66. Louis T. Wright to Walter White, 25 October 1944; minutes of the National Medical Committee, 15 December 1944; NAACP Medical Committee, “Brief Outline of Principles and Policies” (14 July 1944); National Medical Committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1944), NAACP group II, box A138, General Office File, Board of Directors, National Medical Committee, General 1944–1949, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; National Medical Committee of the NAACP, “Pre-Organizational Statement of the National Medical Committee”; Louis T. Wright to Dr William Darrach (n.d.), box 4, folder 64, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
67. Walter White to Louis T. Wright, 27 June 1945, personal and confidential; Walter White to Montague Cobb, 5 July 1945; Walter White to Louis T. Wright, 27 June 1945; Louis T. Wright to Walter White, 22 May 1945, box 4, folder 59, Wright Papers, Countway Library; memorandum, digest of correspondence re: employment of Dr Montague Cobb in connection with heading NAACP National Medical Committee, 1 June 1945; Louis T. Wright to Dr Cobb, 4 January 1945; “Preliminary Prospectus for Work of the Medical Consultant, NAACP,” 13 July 1945, NAACP group II, box A138, General Office File, Board of Directors, National Medical Committee, Cobb, W. Montague, 1944–1954, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
68. W. M. Cobb, *Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro*, 1–39 (also published in *The Crisis*, July 1947, 201–211); W. M. Cobb, “Progress and Portents for the Negro in Medicine,” 107–122, 124, 125.
69. W. M. Cobb, “The National Health Program of the NAACP,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 45 (1953): 333–339; National Emergency Committee Against Mob Violence, memorandums and photographs, meeting with President Truman, 19 September 1946, NAACP group II, box A481, General Office File, President’s Committee on Civil Rights, Statements, Reports, and Press Releases, 1946–1947, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
70. NAACP group II, box A481, General Office File, files: President’s Committee on Civil Rights, Correspondence, Carr, Robert K., 1947; President’s Committee on Civil Rights, Correspondence, General, November–December 1947; President’s Committee on Civil Rights, Statements, Reports and Press Releases, 1946–1947, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
71. “Honors: Louis T. Wright”; A. del Maynard, “Dr. Louis T. Wright: His Role and Rise to Power,” in *Surgeons for the Poor*, 94–102; “Negro Fellow,” *Time*, 29 October 1934, box 130-6, folder 14, Wright Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
72. W. M. Cobb, “The Louis T. Wright Library of Harlem Hospital,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 44 (1952): 297–309.
73. A. del Maynard, “The Louis T. Wright Library,” file: Louis T. Wright—Miscellaneous, A. del Maynard Papers, New York Academy of Medicine.
74. *Ibid.*
75. L. T. Wright, memorandum, “Research Work,” file: Louis T. Wright, A. del Maynard Papers, New York Academy of Medicine; “Honors: Louis T. Wright.”
76. “Honors: Louis T. Wright”; Edwards and Gitlin, “Surgeon for Democracy”; L. T. Wright, “Intra-dermal Vaccination Against Smallpox,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 71 (1918): 654–657; Louis T. Wright to Dr Paul O’Leary, 29 January 1949, NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—General, 1948–1949, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection; bibliography of scientific papers of Louis Tompkins Wright, *Harlem Hospital Bulletin* 6 (1953): 89–95, biographical file: Wright, Louis T., Robert W. Woodruff Library Archives and Special Collections, Atlanta University Center.
77. Dr Channing Tobias to Dr Brock Chisolm, 15 April 1952, box 1, folder 5, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
78. L. T. Wright, memorandum, “Research Work.”
79. Box 5, folders 119–128, Wright Papers, Countway Library; NAACP group II, box A149, General Office File, Board of Directors, Louis T. Wright—Death of, 1952, Library of Congress Manuscript Collection.
80. “Award to Louis T. Wright of American Cancer Society Medal for 1952,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 4 April 1953:15, box 7, folder 114, Wright Papers, Countway Library.
81. Reynolds, “Hospitals and Civil Rights, 1945–1963”; Reynolds, “The Federal Government’s Use of Title VI and Medicare.”
82. A. del Maynard, Louis T. Wright Memorial Lectures, file: Louis T. Wright, del Maynard Papers, New York Academy of Medicine; Wilkins, “Fighter for Equality and Excellence.”