Dr. Gladys Inez Ford

April 1, 1920 – June 29, 2014

Another Fisk legend, Dr. Gladys Inez Forde, departed this life on June 29, 2014. She was born in Ashdown, Arkansas on April 1, 1920, to Adelaide Stella Fullmigher Forde and George Patrick Alfonso Forde, M.D.

When she was seven years old, Dr. Forde’s family moved to Houston, Texas because her father had taken a position at the newly opened Houston Negro Hospital, now known as Riverside General Hospital.

Dr. Forde graduated from Spelman College in 1940, and earned a master’s degree at the University of Michigan. She then earned her M.F.A. degree at Western Reserve University. In 1955, she was awarded her Ph.D. degree by Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve University). Prior to joining the Fisk University faculty in 1944, she taught at Bennett College for Women for a year. As Professor of Dramatics and Speech, Dr. Forde impacted the lives of hundreds of Fisk students whom she taught before she retired in 1985.

After her retirement, she returned to Houston. Despite her retirement, Dr. Forde taught writing to students in the area who were interested in entering the health professions, as well as those preparing for the MCAT examinations, up until the summer of 2004.

In January of 2010, Dr. Forde donated The Forde Collection of news clippings, programs, photographs and a publication to the African American Library of the Houston Public Library at the Edgar M. Gregory School, Houston’s first public school for African Americans. An avid art collector, Dr. Forde shared her collection in several exhibitions. Her collection includes works by Aaron Douglas, David Driscoll and Stephanie Pogue.

Dr. Forde was active in her church, St. James’ Episcopal Church, and was a member of The Catherine Roett Reid Chapter, Daughters of the King. The Daughters of the King is an order for women who are communicants of the Episcopal Church, churches in communion with it, or churches in the historic Episcopate but not in communion with it.

Her funeral will be held on Tuesday, July 8, 2014, 11:00 a.m., at St. James’ Episcopal Church, 3129 Southmore Boulevard, Houston, TX 77004. Viewing will be at 10:00 a.m. McCoy and Harrison Funeral Home are in charge of arrangements. Floral arrangements may be sent to the funeral home at 4918 Martin Luther King, Houston, TX 77021. The telephone number is (713) 659-7618.

Photo Credit: Houston Style magazine -- taken January 20, 2014, at the 3rd Annual MLK Jazz Brunch hosted by the Houston Fisk Alumni Association, Inc. and appeared in the Houston Style magazine.