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Lula Cowan McNair RN '53, BSN, MS from Voices (2013) by Evelyn Wicker

My name is Lula Cowan McNair. I was born in Henderson, North Carolina, on June 12, 1932. I had one sibling, a brother who was four-and-a-half years older. I graduated in 1950 from Henderson Institute, a local high school. I was an average student, graduating in the upper one-fourth of my class.

I chose nursing as a career because there were not a lot of choices for Black women and I had a desire to learn how to help sick people after learning how to administer insulin and check urine sugars at the age of twelve.

There were no counselors at my high school; therefore, I used the library, talked with the nurse at our local hospital across the street from my high school, and requested information from different schools. I applied to the Lincoln Hospital School of Nursing (LHSN), was accepted, and entered the Class of 1953 in the fall of 1950. There were twenty-two students in this class; ten of those twenty-two entrants graduated in 1953. The attrition rate was high due to the failure of my classmates to meet academic requirements and to other circumstances.

On admission there were four students in each room of the dormitory and a housemother who was like a real "mom." Our spiritual needs were supported by early morning prayer at the start of the day, led by our housemothers. We also attended Vespers on Wednesday evening led by a local minister in addition to another Vespers at North Carolina College. ...