

HARRY LESTER JOHNSON

1896 - 1966

Harry Lester Johnson was born September 20, 1896, the second of two sons born to Emily Dixon and Hugh White Johnson. He grew up in Chatham county, near Liberty, North Carolina, attended Sylvan School, and graduated from Silk Hope High School in 1912. He played baseball and the team won the state championship that year.

Following a family tradition begun by his maternal grandmother, he attended Guilford College for three years, dropping out for a year between both the freshman and sophomore terms in order to work to earn money to continue his education. After serving a year in the navy, he began his medical studies at UNC - Chapel Hill. At that time the School of Medicine curriculum covered only the first two years. He and two other classmates then transferred to the University of Cincinnati, where he graduated in 1924. He interned there, at the Cincinnati General Hospital, and he met and married Louise Theobald, at student in the U. of C. School of Nursing. They married July 14, 1925, after her graduation, and moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he began a residency in urology at Henry Ford Hospital.

At the urging of John Wesley Long, a prominent surgeon, the Johnsons returned to North Carolina, where Dr. Johnson practiced surgery with Dr. Long until the latter's death. He continued a private practice until he was asked to become chief surgeon at the newly opened Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital in Elkin, NC in 1931. He remained there until 1935, when he was invited to serve in the same position at Hickory Memorial Hospital in Hickory, NC. After three years there, he moved to Newton, NC to be chief of surgery at Catawba Memorial Hospital. A year later he decided to go back into the private practice of medicine and surgery, and returned to Greensboro, where he remained until 1946, when he was again invited to serve as surgeon in Elkin. He retired in 1965 from the active practice of surgery, but worked part-time as a consultant for the state until his death June 2, 1966.

He was a Kiwanian, serving as president of the Elkin club, and as District VI (?) governor. He was also a member of the American Medical Association, the Southern Medical Association, the Surry County Medical Association, and was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. During World War II he was an active member of the North Carolina State Guard. He served as president of the North Carolina Hospital Association, and was later appointed by then governor Luther Hodges to serve on the Medical Care Commission, which was instrumental in the building of many community hospitals. He continued to serve on that commission until his death.

He had two children, a daughter, Phyllis, who is a graduate of