

Hampton Nurses Buck Hospital Jim Crow; Fired

Nurses Protest; Fired

HAMPTON — Three Negro nurses at Dixie Hospital have been fired, after eating in the staff cafeteria instead of taking their meals to a converted classroom set aside for them.

Miss Patricia Taylor, Mrs. Mildred Smith and Miss Agnes L. Stokes were dismissed from the hospital Aug. 9 after having been reprimanded the day before for eating in the cafeteria.

ACCORDING to Mrs. Smith who had worked at the hospital since 1955, she and the two other nurses passed through the cafeteria line as usual on Aug. 8, but after getting their food, instead of going to the segregated classroom reserved for them, took tables in the cafeteria.

Questioned about the dismissals Wednesday morning, an official at the hospital told a Guide reporter that he was very busy at the time and that he would have no comment on the matter that day.

Shortly after lunch that day they were censured by a hospital official and warned not to eat there again, according to Mrs. Smith.

ON AUGUST 9, six Negro nurses, these three included, ate in the main cafeteria. The same officials came to their table and told them to take their meals to the back room. They all left without completing their meals. Later in the day, the three nurses were informed that they had

been dismissed, the Guide was informed.

Several white nurses, one of them in tears, expressed disapproval of the action and one white nurse suggested that "all of the Negro nurses quit in a group" to let officials know how much they were needed.

PRIOR TO May of this year Negro nurses who wished to eat in the converted classroom were required to telephone their orders to the staff cafeteria and then have the food brought to the room set aside for them. Since May the nurses have been allowed to pass through the line.

All white employees and visitors dine in the staff cafeteria but no Negroes eat there except Negro doctors who are allowed to be seated in an unsegregated manner at the tables.

SEVERAL complaints relative to the racial policies at the hospital have been made to the Hampton Council on Community Relations, a recently organized group which aims to promote interracial harmony, it was disclosed.

Negro patients are restricted to the second floor of the hospital without regard to sex or the nature of their illness, with the exception of maternity patients who are placed in the main maternity ward on the third floor.

INFORMED sources pointed out that the maternity ward was desegregated only after the local health officials ordered that Negro mothers and babies be moved from the all-purpose second floor.

Negro children are not allowed in the pediatrics ward but are also assigned to the



Leaving the main entrance of Dixie Hospital after being fired for refusing to bow to the hospital's segregation practices are three nurses, from left, Miss Patricia L. Taylor, Mrs. Mildred M. Smith and Miss Agnes L. Stokes. The three ate lunch in the main cafeteria instead of taking their meals to a converted classroom which has been set aside for Negro nurses. (Photo by Benjamin Smith)

second floor and confined to four small rooms separated from Negro adults by two doors.

NEGRO physicians with white patients also face hardships. Officials either want to place the whites on the "Negro" floor, in isolated rooms or have them use white physicians, the Guide was told.

No Negro nurse works in a supervisory capacity at Dixie not even on the second floor. No Negro has ever been employed in the business office or worked on the switchboard.

Fired For Fighting Bias

Hampton Hospital Told To Hire 3 Nurses Again

RICHMOND — The management of Dixie Hospital in Hampton must reinstate three nurses, Mildred Smith, Agnes L. Stokes and Patricia L. Taylor, in their jobs and pay them for all time lost in almost three years, the Fourth U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled.

The nurses lost their jobs in August 1963 because they violated hospital policy by eating in the cafeteria instead of a converted classroom which had been set aside for Negro employees.

THE DECISION of the Court of Appeals reversed a

U. S. District Court ruling holding that the three were not entitled to relief at the time of their dismissals and could not find remedy in later court decisions.

Officials of the hospital admitted that the nurses were dismissed on the second day they ate in the hospital cafeteria, and said that they had been warned against violating an established regulation.

The new decision holds that "these plaintiffs have established a valid claim for relief based on the hospital's interference with their (See **HAMPTON, P. 2**) ..

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constitutional rights.'

WHEN THE three were discharged they pointed out that the room set aside for more than 100 Negro employees to eat had seating for only 35. They also noted that Negro employees had to telephone their orders to the cafeteria and then wait for them to be delivered.

These handicaps often resulted in Negro employees

being unable to eat within their 30-minute lunch period, the plaintiffs told the courts through NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund lawyers. Too, they said, Negroes were being humiliated by discrimination although the hospital had received \$1.75 million in federal funds in 1965 after promising to not discriminate on account of race, color, religion and nationality.