

MEET THE 1ST ATA NATIONAL CHAMPIONS TALLEY HOLMES & LUCY DIGGS SLOWE



Talley Robert Holmes, Class of 1910, was born on December 9, 1888 in Washington, D.C. Mr. Holmes graduated from Dartmouth College in 1910 with a mathematics degree. He served as an interpreter and intelligence officer in World War I.

Upon returning to Washington, D.C., he taught German, French, Latin, and mathematics in the District school system. While teaching, he studied law at Howard University and received a degree in 1924. Mr. Holmes also owned Whitelaw Hotel, which was the largest hotel available to Negroes in Washington at the time.

Talley Holmes was one of the founders of the American Tennis Association (ATA) because the National Tennis Association excluded Negroes and other people of color. He was national champion of the ATA in 1917, 1918, 1921, and 1924. He won the doubles championship eight times. Talley R. Holmes died on March 10, 1969 in Washington, D.C. at age eighty.

Lucy Diggs Slowe lost both of her parents by the age of six and went to live with her Aunt Martha Price. She soon moved from Lexington, Virginia to Baltimore, Maryland seeking greater life opportunity. At the age of 13, she entered the Baltimore segregated public school system.

Proving to be an exemplary student, Slowe graduated from the Baltimore Colored School in 1904, becoming the first female graduate and the first scholarship recipient of the school to enter Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Slowe graduated as class valedictorian from Howard University in 1908 and accepted a teaching position at Douglass High School in Baltimore. In 1911, she began studies at Columbia University's Graduate School of Arts and Science in New York. After completing a M.A. in 1915, continued with student personnel classes at Columbia's Teachers College.

Slowe's professional career included teaching assignments in Baltimore and later in the Washington, D.C. school system. In 1919, the first Black Junior High School was established in the Washington, D.C. school system with Slowe as principal. In 1922, Slowe was hired by Howard University as the Dean of Women, a first.

In 1935, she helped organize the National Council of Negro Women and became its secretary. She helped found the National Association of College Women and became its first president. She also worked with the progressive Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom organization.

As an undergraduate in 1908, she was a founding member of the first Greek letter sorority for black women, Alpha Kappa Alpha. The sorority has remained continuously active from 1908 to the present and after 103 years in existence, boasts a membership of over 260,000 college educated women worldwide.

