



## Smithsonian Institution

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

### The Guardian

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## OUR HERITAGE

1922-- The first nursing class of the St. Louis Hospital No. 2 Training School for Nurses, graduates.  
[[photograph- five African American nursing students in white uniforms, entitled: "CLASS '22"]]

1922-- St. Louis City Hospital #2 and the Training School for Nurses, were born out of a dire need for adequate medical facilities for care of Negro patients and the training of Negro doctors and nurses.

However, three years following its origin, it became quite evident that City Hospital #2 was quite inadequate.

A typical day at City Hospital #2 would reveal, many patients crowded into the poorly lighted corridors, with little or not privacy provided, bathroom facilities at a minimum, equipment was obsolete and insufficient for the adequate care of the many patients.

It was during this time that, a prominent Negro citizen of St. Louis, had a dream.... The dreamer visualized, the construction of a separate and distinct institution for the care of the colored indigent sick of the City of St. Louis.

The dreamer was Attorney Homer Gilliam Phillips, a native of Sedalia, Missouri, and a graduate of Howard University.

Attorney Phillips and the re-activated Citizens Committee, began contacting every civic organization in the city and country. Attorney Phillips was determined in his efforts to seek better hospital facilities for the Negro doctor and his patients.  
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## HERITAGE

[[drawing of a man entitled: "Attorney Homer G. Phillips"]]

1923-- A Bond Issue was passed, by the City of St. Louis made it possible to plan a new modern hospital building. However opposing parties sought to prevent the construction of this new hospital. After much delay and wrangling from the opposition, construction for the new Homer G. Phillips Hospital was finally begun in 1932.

During the development of the School of Nursing, there have been nine Superintendents of Nursing who have contributed to the school's progress.

## DIRECTORS OF NURSING

[[photograph of a female- entitled "Gertrude E. Martin 1919-1927"]]

[[blank box says "photo not available" entitled: "Amina J. Merkel 1927-1931"]]

[[photograph of a female- entitled "Talitha Helmkamp (deceased) 1932-April 14, 1936"]]



1937-- Attorney Phillips did not live to see his dream come true, but it did. The new hospital was officially dedicated on Monday, February 22, 1937, and named in his honor.

The student nurses were moved from the old, sometimes unheated, buildings on Lawton and Pine, to the new structure, on June 1, 1937. They lived in the area, which is presently the Physical Therapy Department, until the new modern nurses residence was completed later during the year.

A typical student nurses day in 1937, was to arise at 5:00 A.M., dress furiously and spend a 12 hour tour of duty on the ward and in classes. Off duty time was 7:00 P.M., you were two minutes late leaving the ward, weary but rushing, only to find that the bus had left you. Tired and no carfare, that grumpy ole Mr. Shivers, why he even left his own daughter.

The new nurses home provided dormitories for 147 nurses and 24 internes. The total bed capacity of the new hospital was 685.

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