

Andrew Jackson Foster II (1925-1987)
Early African American Graduate of Gallaudet University
Missionary/Founder of Deaf Schools in Africa

Quote:

“I felt called to take the lights of education and the Gospel to the deaf in Africa...at that time, Africa had only a dozen special schools and virtually no churches for the deaf.”



Foster stands behind some of his students in Ghana in 1957.

(picture on right from www.cmd.org ...left from Holgate 2010}

Born: 27 June 1925
Birmingham, Alabama

Died: December 3, 1987
Rwanda, Africa

Family of origin:
Father: Wiley Foster (Georgia: coal miner and veteran) and mother Veline Foster (Alabama)
Oldest in family of 4 (brother Edward was also Deaf)

Involvement and Contributions to the Deaf Community:
Became Deaf at age 11 along with his brother, Edward
Alumni of Alabama School for Negro Deaf and Blind, Talladega
Identified as the first African American student to graduate from Gallaudet University

Established a mission group for Deaf Africans
Founded over 31 schools for the Deaf in Africa and widely recognized as “the father of Deaf Education in Africa”

Schooling:

Alabama School for Negro Deaf and Blind
1947-1950: Detroit Institute of Commerce (graduating with honors)
1948-1951: American School (Chicago, correspondence high school courses)
1951-1954 BA from Gallaudet College (with summer school sessions at Hampton Institute in Virginia).
1954-1955: MA in Education from Michigan State Normal College (Eastern Michigan University). First Deaf and African American to earn a graduate degree from Michigan State
1956: Seattle Pacific College (for Missionary education studies)
1961: Postgraduate work Wayne State University
Detroit Bible College

Professional Experiences:

Organized Christian Mission for Deaf Africans (later Christian Missions for the Deaf)
First Established Accra (Ghana) Mission Schools for the Deaf (1957), later Mampong-Akuapim Residential School for the Deaf (Ghana).
Went on to established over 30 schools for the Deaf in a number of African Countries including:
Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Senegal, Gabon, Burundi, Chad, Dem. Republic of Congo, and Cameroon.
Created training programs for educators/workers of the Deaf in Africa including Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mali, Dem. Rep. of Congo
Supported several African students at Gallaudet University

Personal information:

1961: Married Berta Zuther (Deaf from Germany) in Nigeria
Five children

Honors/Recognition:

1962: Alpha Sigma Pi Fraternity (Gallaudet University) “man of the year”
1970: Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Gallaudet University
1975: Alumnus of the year (Gallaudet University)
1981: Alumni Honor award (Eastern Michigan University)
1982: Alumni Medallion Award (Seattle Pacific University)
2004: National Black Deaf Advocates donates Andrew Foster Bust to Gallaudet University
2004: Andrew J. Foster Auditorium at Gallaudet University named in his honor
NBDA established Andrew Foster Endowment Fund
Gallaudet University has a Dr. Andrew Foster Merit Based Scholarship award

List of original documents/links:

Foster, A. (1975). *The Social Aspect of Deafness: School Years*. Retrieved from <http://www.cmdeaf.org/resources/articles-by-dr-foster/the-social-aspect-of-deafness>

Foster, A. (n.d.). *Twelve Scriptural Reasons Why You Should Be Concerned About the Lost Deaf*. Retrieved from <http://www.cmdeaf.org/resources/articles-by-dr-foster/twelve-scriptural-reasons>

Foster, A. (n.d.). *Roots Out of a Dry Ground*. Retrieved from <http://www.cmdeaf.org/resources/articles-by-dr-foster/roots-out-of-a-dry-ground>

Andrew Foster: African American Registry. Retrieved from: http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/andrew-foster-deaf-will-hear-words-book

References and Books/Articles /Links about Andrew Foster:

Diouf, K. (2007). *Missionary Biographical Sketch of Andrew Jackson Foster (1925-1987)*. Port Harcourt, Nigeria: High Calling Outreach Publications. Retrieved from <http://www.freewebs.com/kennethdiouf/foster.htm>

Ilabor, Emmanuel. (2009). *Dr. Andrew Jackson Foster*. Dugbe, Ibadan, Nigeria: Christian Mission for the Deaf.

Kiyaga, B.N., & Moores, F.D. (2003) Deafness in Sub-Saharan Africa. *American Annals of the Deaf* 148 (1), 18-24.

Stow, Alison (November 2010). Andrew Foster: Establishing Deaf Education in Africa. Paper from the Masters in Secondary and Science Education program, National Technical Institute of the Deaf.

Other information/documents/images:



(Above from Diouf, 2007; Below from Cmd.org site Berta and Foster and family)



[the memorial at the site of the plane crash in Gisenyi, Rwanda, from Cmd.org]

Additional Quotes from Andrew Foster:

From the Keynote given at the Seventh World Congress of the Deaf, Washington, DC:
31 July 1975. Below quoted from Ilabor (2009)

"The logic of this group of educators (pure oralists) is that it is the normal means by which normal people communicate...Employing restrictive and suppressive means of communication to achieve normalcy seem as illogical as it is impractical...quite universally, they (the oral 'successes') are overshadowed by the number of failures, a fact which rarely seems to bother exponents of the oral method...The loudest advocates of '*demutization*' are teachers and theorists who have no firsthand knowledge of living among the deaf. They seldom have anything to do with the deaf after they reach adulthood, when the effects of oralism could be better gauged. Few are the deaf adults themselves who look back upon their pure oral schooling and wholeheartedly endorse the method....Language skills are best learned through free usage; they evolve and expand in an atmosphere of freedom, as with hearing children." (1975)

Below quoted from: Kiyaga & Moores (2003).

"In the sheer numbers of schools he established by himself, Foster is unrivaled by anyone, hearing or Deaf, in the history of education of the Deaf."(pg. 20)

"In the 20th century, Andrew Foster...had unparalleled impact on deaf education in the region, establishing 31 schools for the Deaf, training a generation of deaf leaders and introducing his concept of Total communication which embraced both American and indigenous signs." (pg. 18)