

The Gertrude S. Carraway Award for Merit
Nomination Narrative
for
Helen Gordon Quigless, Jr.

Helen Gordon Quigless was born July 16, 1944 in Washington D.C. to Mrs. Helen G. Quigless and the late Dr. Milton D. Quigless. Helen grew up in St. Luke's Episcopal Church and was confirmed in December 1956 under the pastorship of Rev. John S. Spong and in the Sunday School under Mrs. M. M. Weston. She completed her elementary education at Patillo School in Tarboro and received her high school diploma from The Putney School in Putney, Vermont. She received her B.A. degree in English from Fisk University, Nashville, TN in 1966 and her M.A. in Library and Information Science from Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA in 1968. She was inducted into Phi Beta Mu International Honor Society for that profession. Her poetry has received widespread recognition in the literary anthologies *Black Southern Voices*, *E!!! Malcolm*, *The New Black Poetry* and *Today's Negro Voices*. She worked as a librarian at the University of the District of Columbia where she was co-founder of the Association of African American Bibliography, an organization for writers, readers and librarians. She was instrumental in building the library collection.

Due to her rheumatoid arthritis, Ms. Quigless returned to Tarboro in 1972 where she channeled her passion for education, civil rights, and the arts into dynamic community service. She was a member of the Edgecombe County Arts Council for over 15 years. During that time, she designed Partners In Arts program for underprivileged youth and successfully secured donations and grant funding. Ms. Quigless was also a member of Tarboro Community Outreach. As the editor, she worked with Susan Fecho to produce its quarterly newsletter. Another outstanding accomplishment was the conception and execution of her mother's surprise 75th birthday gala event in 1993 for over 100 people from all parts of the country. Other memberships and affiliations include President of the Phoenix Historical Society, member of the Furman Matthewson Advisory Council, the AAUW (past two-time President), the NAACP, and Honorary Chair of the Martin Luther King Commemorative Banquet in 1996. She received the Continuing the Dream Award in 2003 for community service by the Edgecombe County Board of Education and the Phoenix Historical Society's Certificate of Appreciation for Preservation Efforts on February 22, 2003. Inspired by the 1997 award-winning exhibit, "Health and Healing Experiences in North Carolina" at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh, N.C. for which Dr. Milton D. Quigless, Sr. donated all his operating room equipment, Ms. Quigless conceptualized the Quigless Clinic-Hospital Historic Exhibit in Tarboro, N.C. She was instrumental in having the Clinic-Hospital placed on the National Registry of Historic Sites and later launched into a 3-year process of preparing for the Tarboro exhibit. She selected various documents and materials to be included in the exhibit and oversaw construction for it. Ms. Quigless passed away on January 17, 2004. However, her wishes and concepts were brought to completion and the Quigless Clinic-Hospital Exhibit opened on May 16, 2004.

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Mrs. Helen G. Quigless was born in Washington, D.C. October 25, 1918. From childhood, she grew up in the Baptist faith in a Christian and devoted family. She graduated Cum Laude from Miners Teachers College, now a part of University of the District of Columbia in 1939. She taught third grade in Washington D.C. until her marriage to Dr. Milton D. Quigless, Sr. in 1943. After her marriage, she moved to Tarboro, N.C. and reared three children. Mrs. Quigless was also instrumental in the success of the Quigless Clinic-Hospital. As principal administrator and dietician there, she participated in policy making and day-to-day operations. She took seminars in Chapel Hill, N.C. in dietetics sponsored by the State of North Carolina. During World War II, Mrs. Quigless took part in supporting the war effort. She was appointed to the Red Cross Committee. Her civic duties continued later as she assisted with Meals on Wheels. Mrs. Quigless joined The Links, a national social, cultural and community service organization in 1948 and was active for 52 years. She was one of the founders of the area chapter. In 1956 she joined St. Luke's Episcopal Church, one of the oldest African American Episcopal churches in North Carolina, and later served as President of the Church Women for 15 years. Under her leadership, restoration and improvements were made to the church structure and property. For 9 years of Mrs. Quigless' term, the community looked forward to the pre-Christmas concerts given at the church. Subsequently, Mrs. Quigless decided to return to school to acquire an advanced degree. In 1972, she received her Masters Degree in Library and Information Studies with honors from Atlanta University, now known as Clark Atlanta University. She was inducted into the international library honor society Beta Phi Mu. Later, she became a member of the American Association of University Women. Throughout her adult life, Mrs. Quigless was always interested in historic preservation and beautifying the environment. On November 20, 1984, she was awarded the Jacque Drane Nash Award for Historic Preservation. This was as a result of the restoration and remodeling of the houses on the residential block of East Granville Street, in Tarboro, North Carolina. This included the home of Congressman George Henry White. Concurrently and duly noted, Mrs. Quigless beautified the same residential block by lining the street with crepe myrtles. After the Hurricane Floyd flood in 1999, she restored the homes on East Granville Street again. Her beautiful yard became part of the Phoenix Historical Society's tour and she was honored with the Phoenix Society's Certificate of Appreciation for Preservation Efforts on February 22, 2003.