Ruffin Honore Paul, Sr.

Ruffin Honore Paul, Sr., came to Southern University “when Southern was just a baby” in 1914. He enrolled in the 4th grade class and stayed at Southern until graduation in 1926. After graduating from Southern in 1926 he acquired several credit hours at Xavier University, New Orleans, Louisiana; and subsequently did approximately 15 hours work on the Masters’ Degree at his alma mater, Southern University.

Paul spent more than sixteen years working as a teacher and principal in the school systems in Louisiana prior to coming to Southern to work as an electrician. He taught school in Concordia Parish from 1935-1940; Madison Parish from 1940-1941; and Winnsboro, Louisiana from 1941-1943.

Paul came to Southern University as a result of the following incident: One Sunday on September 5, 1943, a breakdown of campus electrical facilities occurred; a tree had fallen on one of the high tension lines. At this time Mr. Paul was on vacation from his school in Winnsboro. He worked from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. repairing the line. Mr. J. [James] B. [Blaine] Moore, supervisor of maintenance, asked him to come back and work with Southern as a result of that afternoon’s activity. Mr. Paul received his electrical training at Chicago Engineering Works Institute.

Paul organized and trained the first dance band and marching band at Southern University in 1927 with Dr. Felton G. Clark as the leading trombone player in the band. He organized the first Colored High School Band in the state of Louisiana in 1927 and he also organized the Northeast Louisiana Athletic and Literary Association with the assistance of Mr. N. B. Duncan [deceased], of Newellton, Louisiana.

In 1935 he organized the Southwest Louisiana Athletic and Literary Association with the help of Dr. William Gray. At that time, he resided in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Louisiana Interscholastic Athletic and Literary Association (LIALA) was formed under his dynamic leadership. The organization was known throughout Louisiana and many other states, but few knew the person who is responsible for the organization along with his fellow workers — Mr. Ruffin Honore Paul, Sr.

In 1936, Paul was responsible for the building of the first Colored High School Gymnasium in the state of Louisiana. During his life he has organized and trained nine bands in the state of Louisiana. For ten years or more he had served on the door for the basketball games as well as serving on the football gates for more than twelve years.
In 1947, Mr. Ruffin H. Paul became the first licensed electrician of the Negro race in the city of Baton Rouge. Among the many other contributions that Paul had given to Southern University was the spearheading of the drive for the construction of the Clark Memorial Building. Some of the other persons who were responsible for the project along with Mr. Paul consisted of: Mr. J. J. Hedgemon, registrar at Southern; Mrs. Ruby Henton, Director of the Student Union and the former Miss Allegra Will. Mr. Paul served as president of the Scotlandville chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity and was a charter member of the chapter, which were some of the leading men of the community among its members.

His hobbies always included music. He played the trumpet, trombone, tuba, mellophone1 and the alto horn. He also taught wind and percussion instruments, including the drums.

Mr. Ruffin Honore Paul, Sr.’s wife was a teacher in the State Industrial School for Colored Youth in Baker, Louisiana, and was also a graduate of Southern University. The two were parents to two sons and a daughter. Miss Juanita Paul, at the time was a teacher at Harding Elementary School and Ruffin H. Paul, Jr., an electrical contractor for Paul’s Electric Company who attended the Greer Shop Training Institute in Chicago, Illinois where he received a diploma in electrical refrigeration and air-conditioning. Likewise, his brother, Edison Leo Paul, was also in the electrical contracting business and attended Southern University.

1 A mellophone is a valved brass instrument similar in form and range to the French horn. A marching or military band brass instrument similar in appearance and range to the French horn but slightly smaller and simpler to play.


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