Israel Smith Powell

Israel Smith Powell received a bachelor’s degree in 1899 from Leland University. The second year following his graduation he joined the Leland system, serving as Principal of the Ruston Normal and Academic Institute until the school was taken over by the public education system of the state.

Principal Powell and President Joseph Samuel Clark met in 1896 when both were students at Leland University, in New Orleans, Louisiana. There they became fast friends. It was this friendship together with his ability, character and personality which caused President Clark to extend an invitation to him to join the new project at Scotlandville.

“The Southern University” was created to provide the Negroes of the state of Louisiana a practical agricultural and industrial education. The new president of the transplanted institution began his real work at Southern University, September 1913. His first major task facing him was that of selecting a faculty. After further canvassing the state, President Clark was able to persuade Mr. Israel Smith Powell to join the staff of Southern University as an Instructor of Mathematics.

Though not present on March 9, 1914, Mr. Israel Smith Powell remained with Southern University until 1918, when he returned to his alma mater.

Powell was also a member of the Louisiana Colored Teachers Association (LCTA).


Courtesy of: The Archives and Manuscripts Department/John B. Cade Library/Southern University and A&M College/Baton Rouge, LA. 70813-0001.