

## **Biography Dr. Marie Nita Waldron Hamilton**

Written by Sylvia D. Hamilton 4 February 2021

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Dr. Marie Nita Waldron Hamilton was born and grew up in North End Halifax. She had one sister, Gladys Waldron Johnson. Her early education was at Joseph Howe-Bloomfield School, and after graduating, she attended the Nova Scotia Teachers College. She wanted to be a nurse, but nursing was closed to Black women at that time; she wanted to help people, so teaching became her chosen profession. She was married to Gerald Mac Hamilton of Beechville and raised a family of six children.

She was a respected educator and taught in schools throughout Halifax County including North Preston, Hammonds Plains, Beechville and Cherry Brook. While working in those communities, she not only taught children but freely offered her assistance to adults who sought her help. She was a dedicated member of the Beechville Baptist Church and served for many years as church clerk. She worked with the Sunday school, Ladies Auxiliary and adult education programs in the Beechville community. After teaching for more than twenty years in the school system, she established a pre-school program at the community centre now known as Veith House. In the early 1990's she coordinated an Early Childhood Education Course sponsored by the Nova Scotia Teachers College that was designed to train women to run pre-school programs in their own communities.

Remarkably she also found time to tutor adults who wanted to learn to read and write and who attended a program at the North Branch Library in Halifax. Aware that many seniors were lacking some basic services, she decided to set up a program, *Volunteers for Seniors*, to assist them. On the national level, she was a member of the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO). Her life was full of accomplishments and her dedication and community work was recognized provincially and nationally. She was awarded the Queens Jubilee Medal in 1977 and the Persons Award in 1983 at a ceremony held at Government House in Ottawa.

In 1985 she was awarded the Doctor of Humane Letters honorary degree by Mount Saint Vincent University in recognition of her years of service to her community and society. She was one of several African Nova Scotian women featured in the award winning 1989 National Film Board documentary, *Black Mother Black Daughter*, created and co-directed by her daughter, Sylvia D. Hamilton. (the film may be viewed here: [https://www.nfb.ca/film/black\\_mother\\_black\\_daughter/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/black_mother_black_daughter/) )

Dr. Marie's life's motto was: *Take time to care.*