

Carolyn Beatrice Parker

Early Life

November 18, 1917 A little girl named Carolyn Beatrice Parker was born into a family of six children and two loving parents. Her father, Julius A. Parker was the second African American to receive a PhD in Physics from Harvard. Her mother Della Ella Murrel Parker was the sister of Joan Marie Owen a marine biologist among the first African American women to receive a PhD in geology.

Middle life

From 1943 to 1947, Carolyn was a research physicist professor on the Dayton project, at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. The Dayton project was part of the Manhattan project to create atomic weapons in World War II, and continuing into the cold war. Carolyn worked at the Monsanto Chemical company which led top-secret research work using Polonium as the initiator for atomic explosions. According to her sister Carolyn's work was so secret she couldn't tell them her family!

by: Ella Walther

Late Life

Towards the end of her time working on the Dayton project from 1946 to 1947. In 1947 she became an assistant professor at Fisk University in Tennessee. Carolyn's family reported that she died of Leukemia, which is a disease caused by polonium exposure. Her family also reported that she had completed the work for her PhD in Physics at ~~not~~ around 1952 or 1953, but Leukemia prevented her from defending her dissertation.

She died in her hometown of Gadsdenville, Florida on March 3, 1966



Sources:

MIT Black history

Wikipedia

Pictures

black history, mit.edu