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ROBERT S. ABBOTT DIES AFTER LONG ILLNESS

DEATH COMES DURING SLEEP AT HIS HOME

1870 - Robert Sengstacke Abbott - 1940

Nation Stunned By The Passing Of Noted Editor-Publisher

Robert Sengstacke Abbott, owner and publisher of the Chicago Defender, died in his sleep Thursday morning, Feb. 29, at his home, 4742 South Parkway, following an illness with which he was stricken seven years ago.

Only a valiant fight backed by the same determination and tenacity which had made him a hero among his people, enabled the 69-year-old editor to survive so long following his collapse.

Born in St. Simon's Island, Ga., November 24, 1870, to parents who had felt the lash of slavery, ambitious young Abbott came to the city of Chicago at the age of 25, after having received his elementary training in Savannah and graduated from Claflin college and Hampton institute.

After finishing the Chicago Kent college of law where he received the degree of LL.B., he practiced in Gary, Ind. Later, however, he abandoned the practice of law and secured work as a printer in Chicago.

Early he saw the need for a paper in this city to fight discrimination and segregation. His first venture was a daily paper which was short lived.

On May 5, 1905, he published the first issue of the Chicago Defender which, by dogged perseverance and through much hardship, he developed into one of the most powerful weeklies on a national scale.

He was the first publisher of his race to purchase a high speed rotary press. He was active in editorial capacity until taken ill in 1933. He served on Governor Lowden's Race Commission shortly after the riot in Chicago in 1919.

On many occasions he was offered political posts by various governors, but declined. He was a life member of the Chicago Art Institute and of the Chicago Historical Society. He held honorary memberships in several French literary societies. He was awarded the highest honor by the Kappa Alpha Psi college fraternity for distinguished service to his race.

During the world war he served in an advisory capacity to the Southside draft board, and presented the first regimental flag to the 365th Infantry. He served as a speaker on various Liberty Loan drives instituted by the federal government.

Survivors are his widow, Mrs. Edna Rose Denison Abbott; his nephew, John H. Sengstacke who is vice-president and general manager of the Chicago Defender; two sisters in Savannah, Miss Rebecca Sengstacke and Mrs. Eliza McKay, and two other nephews and four nieces in Chicago.

The body lay in state at the home, 4742 South Parkway, from 10 o'clock Saturday morning until 9 o'clock Monday morning. Funeral were held at the Metropolitan Community Church, 41st and South Parkway at 11 o'clock Monday. The Rev. Archibald Carey, assisted by Reverends Evans and Bennett officiated. Burial was in Lincoln cemetery.

