

**National Youth Foundation *Presents:***

# HETTIE SIMMONS LOVE

## PENN PIONEER



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# 2021

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## Youth Writing Workshop

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CHANGEMAKERS



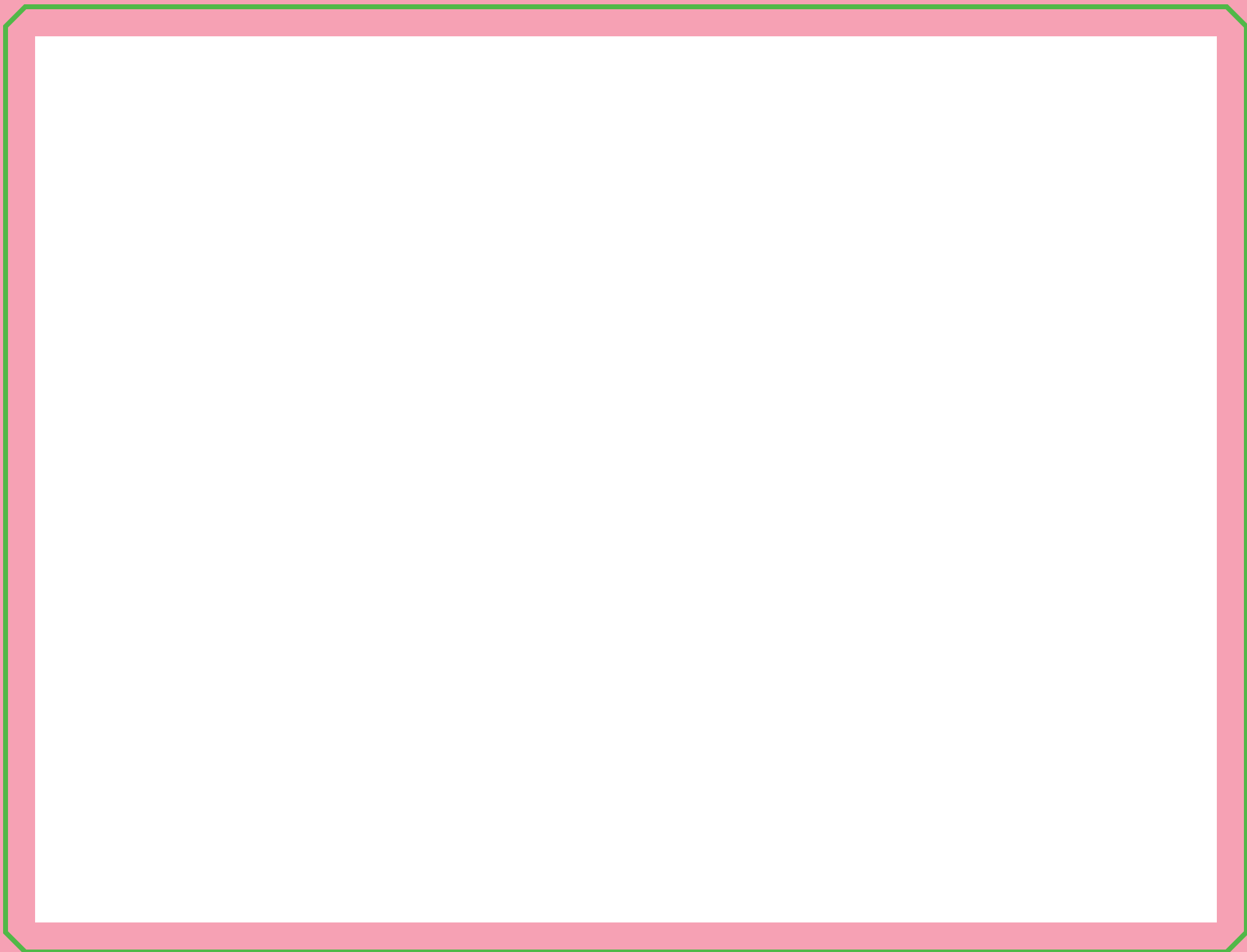
## OUR MISSION

The National Youth Foundation is dedicated to enriching the lives of children through creative educational programming. Our mission is to promote diversity, inclusion, and gender equality, while helping young students develop their literary skills through academic and team-building projects.

*Sophia Hanson, Co-Founder*

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## INTRODUCTION

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. has numerous notable members who have been “the first” in many ways. As the sorority’s International President and Chief Executive Officer, I am pleased to acknowledge the groundbreaking achievement of Hettie Simmons Love, the first African American woman to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School. We salute this amazing member who has given more than 75 years of service to the sorority.

Dr. Glenda Glover, President  
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated



Hettie Simmons was born in the beautiful city of Jacksonville, Florida in 1922. She had a big brother, Charles, and a big sister, Ernest. During the 1920s, life was very difficult for Blacks in the south. Laws were unfair if your skin was darker than others. Many Blacks left the south and traveled north for better opportunities, but Hettie's family, who were business owners, stayed in Florida. Her father was the sole proprietor of Enterprise Meat Market.





Hettie made sure that she woke up early for her first day of fourth grade at her new school. The Boylan-Haven School was a boarding school established in 1886 for Black girls. Their mother drove Hettie and Ernest to school each day. This great school taught many prominent and famous lawyers, doctors, teachers, politicians, actresses and more. Being at the Boylan-Haven School for Girls meant a lot to a young, Black woman at that time. Girls were extremely lucky to get accepted and there was a lot of competition.





While at Boylan-Haven, Hettie made many lifelong friends. It seemed that everyone loved being around Hettie! Hettie was awarded the title of being Miss Boylan-Haven. Because she earned the highest grades during her senior year, Hettie was the graduating class valedictorian.



$$(x + 3)^2 = 4$$

$$8 \div 2(2+2) = ?$$

$$ax^2 + bx + c = 0$$



Hettie received a full scholarship to Bennett College in North Carolina, which was a college for girls. After attending the Boylan-Haven School for Girls, Hettie wanted to attend a co-ed college. She decided to follow in the footsteps of her role-model, Billie Geter, who was a Fisk graduate. It was at Fisk, in 1941, that Hettie joined the first Black college sorority in America, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Fisk University was founded after the Civil War ended in 1866 and was one of the leading Historically-Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) at that time. Fisk was located in Nashville, Tennessee, which meant Hettie had to leave her family for the first time in her life. Hettie graduated from Fisk University in 1943 with a degree in mathematics. Even though she accomplished a great deal, Hettie wanted more.





After graduation, Hettie moved back to Florida and began working at the Afro-American Life Insurance Company - a Black-owned insurance and mortgage company based in Jacksonville. Her brother had attended the University of Michigan for graduate school, so Hettie was aware that some northern universities were accepting Black students. Hettie was interested in New York University, but her mother had contacts in Philadelphia, PA. She was fortunate to be accepted at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. Her mother wanted to make sure Hettie traveled to Philadelphia safely, so she asked her brother to travel with Hettie and help her register for classes.



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On the first day of school, Hettie and her brother needed directions to the registration office at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. Hettie's brother approached a man and asked for help.

"Excuse me, sir, my name is Charles Simmons and this is Ms. Simmons. Are we near the school's registration office?"

"Hello, my name is George Love, and you two just need to walk straight up the path and the registration office will be on the right," added the stranger as he pointed Hettie and her brother in the right direction.

Hettie and George would soon see each other again on campus and at Horn and Hardart, a local eatery. George was a student at Penn's Pre-Med program and he was also a Philadelphia native. On this new encounter, there were sparks between them, and they started to date.



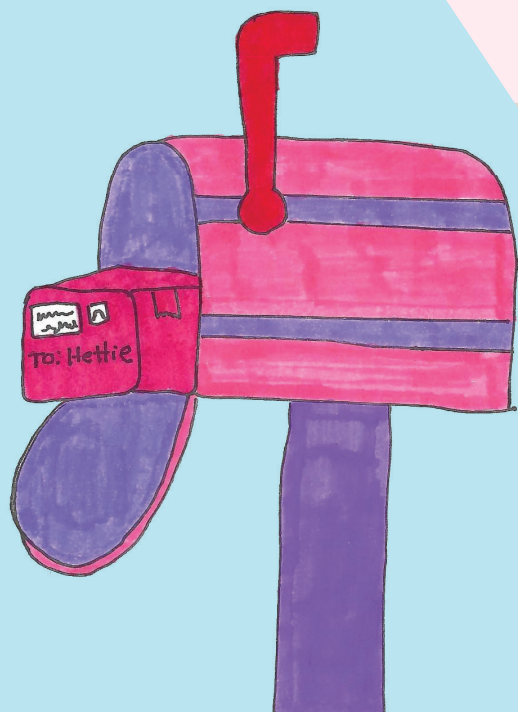


Hettie loved studying at the Wharton School. She noticed that all of her professors were white men, along with the students in her classes. Even though she felt out of place, there were a few Jewish students who always invited Hettie to their study group. They had the same passion for learning as she did! Hettie was thankful to have met these special friends.





In 1947, Hettie became the first African-American student to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, the world's leading business school. There was no acknowledgment or recognition for her great achievement, so she was not aware of her standing as the first African-American graduate. Her mother and her brother came up from Jacksonville for the ceremony. Hettie was excited about graduation and for George and her parents to meet for the first time. George took her on a picnic in Fairmount Park after the ceremony while the two mothers visited. It was a very magical day.



After graduation, Hettie moved back to Florida to live with her family. One day, her brother told her that she received a package and letter from George in the mailbox. Hettie's eyes grew wide. She missed her Philadelphia friend and their long talks. She opened her letter and it said:

"Hettie, my love. Will you be my wife? Will you be my Mrs. Love?"

Inside the package was also an engagement ring. Plans were soon made for a beautiful June wedding.







Hettie Simmons and George Hayward Love were soon married in Florida and then moved to Philadelphia. Hettie began working in the Finance Department at the American Friends Service Committee. Together they raised two beautiful children, Karen and George, Jr.

The family loved adventure and, in 1962, began traveling around the world. George, a high school science teacher, was invited to Turkey on a Fulbright Exchange Teacher program. Hettie's husband and son flew to Turkey while Hettie and her daughter boarded a ship for the journey. The voyage lasted for six days.

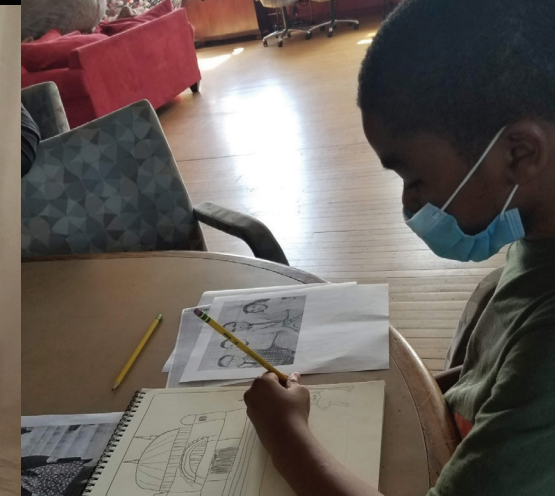
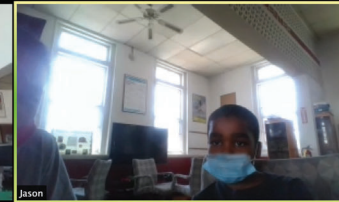
The Love family spent a year in Turkey and additional time traveling throughout the continent of Europe before returning home to Philadelphia.

# AKA LUNCHEON



It was not until 2016 that Hettie learned of her status as the first African-American graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. She was attending an Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA) event to honor her 75 year Diamond status. For the event, she traveled to Atlanta, Georgia with her daughter Karen. After the event, a woman named Lana Woods, who was also an AKA and a Wharton graduate, approached her and inquired about her years at Wharton. Hettie confirmed she graduated in 1947. Lana wanted to explore ways to honor Hettie for her trailblazing legacy. Lana conducted some research and concluded that Hettie was the first African American graduate on record. That was the day that Hettie learned that she was a Penn Pioneer.









*"I am deeply grateful for the determination, grit, and leadership Hettie Simmons Love has demonstrated and am inspired by her legacy at Wharton. As Wharton's first African American graduate, Mrs. Love created her own opportunities through hard work and resilience. Her desire to be known for her accounting expertise rather than her race or gender resonates deeply with me as Wharton's first Black and female dean, and her experience plays a pivotal role in making it possible for me to hold this prestigious position today. I always advise students with big dreams to bet on themselves, and Mrs. Love's example makes clear the possibilities that await for those who do just that."*

Erika H. James, Dean  
The Wharton School

*"It is the nature of Black sororal organizations -- America's vanguards for racial advancement -- to inspire a sisterly reverence. Hettie embodies the best of the legacy of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and as her soror, I feel swelling pride for the path she paved for other African-Americans, the path in pursuit of graduate management education. The year 1947 witnessed the breaking of an educational barrier: Ms. Simmons became the first African-American—male or female—to graduate from the preeminent Wharton School MBA program. For that, she is honored as a trailblazer. My desire to pay homage to her legend hangs as the strand binding our pearls of sisterhood."*

Lana Woods, President, Lana Woods Gallery  
Life Member, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated  
WG'90, Wharton Graduate Executive Board Member

*"In 1947 Hettie Simmons Love earned her MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She joined a sisterhood of trailblazing Penn women. She also opened wide the doors of opportunity for the generations of young women and men who followed. With our deepest admiration and gratitude, Penn proudly celebrates her legacy and this wonderful book."*

Amy Gutmann, President  
University of Pennsylvania

*"Hettie Simmons Love and the Wharton School of Business were actually perfectly matched for each other. Mrs. Love is a brilliant woman whose incredible accomplishment of being the first African American female to earn a Wharton M.B.A. in 1947 forged a path that scores of other African Americans and women have been able to follow. The nation's oldest and most prestigious school granted her entry at a time when the Civil Rights Movement was just beginning. As one of two women in her class and the only person of African descent, Mrs. Love's intellect and strength gave evidence that in a mostly-white, male-dominated world, she had so much to offer. As Wharton is the original from which many other institutions are influenced, so too is Mrs. Love whose courage and intelligence set a standard that continues to inspire business students today and for generations to come. We are fortunate to have a trailblazer like Hettie Simmons Love among the 16,000-plus members of The Links, Incorporated."*

Kimberly Jeffries Leonard, Ph.D. , National President  
The Links, Incorporated

