

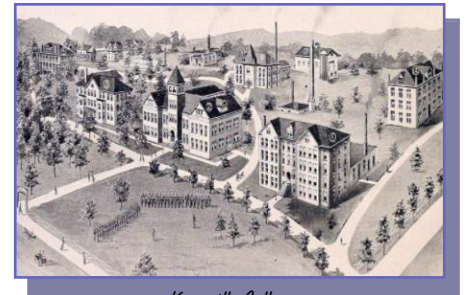
# Don Speed Smith Goodloe



Don Speed Smith Goodloe (June 2, 1878 – September 2, 1959) was born in Lowell, Kentucky. He was a founding principal of what is now Bowie State University and the first African-American graduate of Meadville Theological School, a Unitarian seminary in Meadville, Pennsylvania.

## Education

Goodloe began his post-secondary education at Knoxville College in Tennessee, a segregated normal school founded by Presbyterians for the training of black teachers, ministers, industrial craftsmen, and farmers. At Knoxville, Goodloe observed first-hand the implementation of Booker T. Washington's educational philosophy, which he would later follow in Bowie, Maryland. Blacks would receive moral training and a practical industrial education, learning skills such as brick making, carpentry and agriculture along with training in teaching and business. At Knoxville, students built most of the buildings on campus, cut the timber, and made bricks on site. Goodloe met his future wife, Fannie Carey, at Knoxville College and they married in 1899.



*Knoxville College*



*Berea College*

After studying at Knoxville, Goodloe moved on to Berea College, a racially integrated school in Kentucky. About half of Berea students were black and half white until 1904 when Kentucky passed a law requiring schools to be segregated, as permitted by the 1896 landmark U.S. Supreme Court *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which upheld the constitutionality of "separate but equal." From there, Goodloe began his career as principal of a black public school at Newport, Tennessee. Goodloe and Fannie had their first child, Don Burrowes, during this time. Goodloe then moved the family to Greenville College where he taught and was the principal at a black normal school. The following year, the family moved back to Lowell where Goodloe was a teacher. While in Lowell, a second son, Wallis, was born.

In 1903, after being a student at two normal schools and a teacher and principal in two other normal schools and a black public school, Goodloe felt the need to continue his formal education. Berea College was no longer an option because of the school segregation law. So he moved once again, this time to Meadville, Pennsylvania, a small town in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains in northwestern Pennsylvania. There he enrolled simultaneously in Allegheny College, a Methodist liberal arts college, where he studied for his bachelor's degree, and Meadville Theological School (Unitarian), where he pursued a divinity degree. Fannie gave birth to a third son, Carey, while in Meadville.

Goodloe was not a Unitarian in 1903, but he had distanced himself from conservative Methodist theology and knew that Meadville required no doctrinal test for admittance. He was the fifth African American enrolled at Meadville and the first to graduate from the seminary. Although he may not have encountered overt bigotry at this liberal religious institution, he likely faced some prejudice from fellow students as well as from faculty.



*Meadville Theological School 1906*

Meadville president Franklin Southworth revealed that Goodloe's ambition, in addition to teaching practical skills to black youth, was to provide members of his race with less "emotionalism in religion" and more "moral teaching and preaching." He noted that this enterprising student intended to start his own "small school composed of carefully selected students, and to run the school along with his Sunday preaching."

Goodloe graduated from both schools in 1906. He was the second black student to graduate from Allegheny College. Thereafter, he resumed his career as teacher at Danville Industrial Normal School in Kentucky and as a businessman. His desire to succeed in business demonstrated not only a need to do well for his family, but also the entrepreneurial drive that may have been critical to his success in the development of Bowie Normal School.

## Teaching Career

He was a determined, ambitious man. In 1910, the family left Kentucky for Virginia, where Goodloe became vice principal of Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth. A year later, he moved again, responding to an opportunity to lead the development of a newly relocated school near Baltimore and Washington, known both as the Maryland Normal and Industrial School at Bowie for the Training of Colored Youth and as Maryland State Normal School No. 3.



*Old Farm House  
Bowie, Maryland 1910*

When the Goodloe family arrived in Bowie, the school had a farmhouse, barn, and chicken house. Goodloe espoused a philosophy of self-reliance in harmony with that of educator Booker T. Washington. Like Washington, the new principal at Bowie firmly believed that agricultural training and industrial instruction were essential elements of black education. The school provided instruction in carpentry, blacksmithing, plastering, papering, and shoemaking for the male students, and domestic science, sewing, and millinery work for the women.

However, the school also prepared students to teach in segregated African American elementary schools. The academic curriculum was equal to the ordinary high school course, with English, arithmetic, algebra, history, geography, music, government, physics, botany, Latin, and German. There were six teachers, including Fannie Goodloe, who taught music.

For most of Goodloe's tenure, Bowie Normal School was the only Maryland school open to black students beyond the sixth grade. Despite a lack of resources, the school reached some important goals. In 1916 Goodloe informed the state board, "Our graduates have no difficulty in securing [teaching] positions and filling them competently." Nevertheless, the school encountered difficulties in its early years.

In 1915, the Goodloes built a house of their own. Some seventy years later, the house would be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Goodloe house is the only building still standing from the college's early period. Goodloe resigned his post at Bowie in 1921.



*Goodloe House  
Bowie, Maryland*

## Business Pursuits

In 1922 Goodloe assumed the vice presidency of an insurance company in Baltimore and a year later became the company's president. He grew prosperous enough to purchase rental property in the city. Later, he moved to Washington, and it is reported that he owned extensive property in the District.

## Recognitions

Goodloe's accomplishments did not go unnoticed. In 1915 he was featured in *Who's Who of the Colored Race*; in 1916, *Who's Who in America*. In 1920, the Maryland State Colored Teacher Association honored him with a letter of commendation for the "constant and progressive fight" he had made toward enriching the curriculum and uplifting the standards at the school.

## Legacy

Although there is no record of Goodloe's religious affiliation after Meadville, his religious leanings did have an impact. The Bowie Unitarian Universalist Fellowship changed its name to the Goodloe Memorial Unitarian Universalist Congregation to honor the Reverend Don Speed Smith Goodloe, recognizing him as an educator and the first African American to graduate from Meadville Theological Seminary, a Unitarian seminary. Additionally, one of his sons, Donald B. Goodloe, was an active member at All-Souls Church, Unitarian, in Washington D.C.