



GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS INDUCTEES 1977

ARTHUR G. GASTON was born in Demopolis, Alabama on July 4, 1892 to poor tenant farmers. His father died when he was 12 and he and his mother moved to Birmingham where his mother became a domestic engineer. They lived with the Loveman family, owners of the prominent retail store. After completing the eighth grade, he served a stint in the Army and then worked for the Tennessee Coal & Iron & Steel Company for \$3.10 a day. In addition, he sold peanuts and began lending money to his co-workers with interest at 25 cents on the dollar.

In 1921, with his father-in-law as a partner and \$35 as capital, he began a burial society for black people, the Booker T. Washington Burial Society. This business grew into an incorporated insurance company two years later. The need for Negroes to obtain mortgages to buy homes led Mr. Gaston to establish the Citizens Federal Savings and Loan Association.

The need to train young black women as clerks and typists led his wife **MINNIE GARDNER GASTON**, a graduate of Tuskegee Institute, to start the Booker T. Washington Business College. The institution was accredited, blacks were trained there as accountants, clerks and secretaries; and scholarships were offered to the disadvantaged.

Dr. Gaston passed away in 1996. Mrs. Gaston passed away in 2000.

The Gastons' natural business acumen and hard work made them millionaires. Their love for their people led them to share their good fortune with those less fortunate.