

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

ANNIE TURNBO MALONE

entrepreneur, philanthropist, chemist

“Mrs. Malone’s legacy is a merging of women’s health and economic independence.”



PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE

Background Information

Born: August 9, 1869; Died: May 10, 1957

Malone was born in Metropolis, Illinois as the tenth of eleven children. Both of her parents died when she was young, so she was largely raised by her older sister. She attended high school in Peoria, Illinois, but was frequently ill and missed class often. Although she did not graduate, she discovered her passion and skill in chemistry. She put this skill to use and developed a hair product that could straighten African American women’s hair without damaging it. Realizing that she needed a larger market to be successful, she relocated to St. Louis in 1902 to sell her product.¹

Malone’s Resistance

Due to her status as a Black, female entrepreneur, Malone struggled to market her product through traditional channels of distribution. However, she overcame this obstacle through hard work and perseverance. She and her assistants sold her “Magical Hair Grower” door-to-door and provided demonstrations. This venture was extremely profitable, and she became one of the first female self-made millionaires.

Unlike many, Malone was quite generous with her wealth and chose to invest most of it into organizations and charities.¹ She served as board president of the St. Louis Colored Orphan’s home after donating \$10,000 to build the orphanage in 1919. Throughout the 1920s, Malone partnered yearly with two students in every HBCU, by financing their tuition.

In 1918, Malone used her wealth to found Poro College in St. Louis. This was a school of cosmetology designed to offer fellow African American women an opportunity to become entrepreneurs. There, she also hosted many community gatherings and civic functions. With time, she was able to expand to thirty-two locations nation-wide.¹

Achievements

Malone served as an example of Black, female entrepreneurship that was replicated many times. An intentional philanthropist dedicated to assisting HBCU’S, Malone was a major donor to Howard University. The city of St. Louis has honored Malone’s memory with the Annie Malone Children and Family Service Center.

Essential Questions

1. How did Malone fight against discrimination during her career?
 - a. What parallels can you draw between Malone’s struggle and the struggles of female entrepreneurs today?

2. How did Malone’s actions of resistance inspire and impact Black female working class women in her time?

3. What is an injustice that you face?
 - a. How can you become a leader like Malone, that helps to change the injustices of your current life?

4. ***“Mrs. Malone’s legacy is a merging of women’s health and economic independence”***
 - a. How are the issues of women’s health and economic independence related?

¹Engel, E. (n.d.). Annie Turnbo Malone. Retrieved October 11, 2020, from <https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/historicmissourians/name/m/malone/>

²Annie Turnbo Malone: A Black Philanthropist and Entrepreneur. (n.d.). Retrieved October 11, 2020, from <http://www.blackhistoryheroes.com/2010/10/annie-turnbo.html>