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Dr. Dazelle Simpson, Dr. Rozalyn Paschal-Thomas and Dr. Rozalyn Hester Paschal lead a generation of Miami doctors. —Photo/Craig Reed

# THREE GENERATIONS

## INNER-CITY MEDICAL PRACTICE STAYS IN THE FAMILY

**By Derek Joy**
*Special to the Times*

Within the healthcare field, seldom is there a story of dedication to the inner city. But there is that and more in the pediatric medical practice of Dr. Rozalyn Hester Paschal.

There is a bit of romanticism and history in a practice that spans three generations.

Interestingly enough, the practice was started by Dr. Dazelle Dean Simpson in 1953 at an Overtown location. Simpson, a 1941 graduate of George Washington Carver High School, who went on to Fisk University and Meharry Medical College, became the first Black American Board Certified Pediatrician in Miami in 1953.

Fletcher A. Paschal III was one of Dr. Dean Simpson's patients. While studying pharmacy at the University of Florida, he met Atlanta native, Paschal, who later enrolled in the University of Florida Medical School.

The two were married when she moved to Miami to residency training that led to the specialized field of pediatrics. Paschal was then employed by Simpson in her medical practice that was then located in the Tri-Arts Medical Building at 1001 Northwest 54th Street.

"There is a little more concern here," said Paschal, who, when Simpson retired in 1995, bought the practice, which is now at Northside Shopping Center, 7900 Northwest 27th Avenue, Suite 50.

"If a child is sick we're not going to turn them away," she said.

Paschal has realized the impact that Simpson has made in her life.

"She was a tremendous influence on me," she said. "You go through training learning the scientific aspect of medicine, but it's an art. From Dr. Simpson, I learned that as a Black pediatrician my focus is to help not only Black children but all children. We take a holistic approach."

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That approach has resonated throughout the inner for the past 56 years. Paschal's husband, Fletcher A. Paschal III, while managing the practice, expanded by adding two other offices – one at Jackson North and the other in Plantation.

Paschal's practice partners with the Department of Children and Families and the Automated Community Connection to Economic Self Sufficiency (ACCESS). We help people apply/recertify Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Cash Assistance at our Miami office, with personal assistance.

"Along with ACCESS, there is another program funded by a private grant, which is called Reach Out and Read, whereby we give books to mothers of children six months to five years of age to encourage them to read. This program is designed to encourage reading among residents in the inner-city," according to Fletcher Paschal III.

The practice now enjoys the talents of a third generation. Twins, Dr. Rozalyn Paschal Thomas and Fletcher A. Paschal IV, are currently working in the practice, while their older sister, Lenora Paschal, a graduate of Florida State University, is a biology teacher at Clarkston High School in Clarkston, Ga. Fletcher IV, a business administration graduate with a minor in computer science from Florida International University, is now the office manager. He has established computer network that links all three offices.

Paschal Thomas, a graduate of the University of Florida and the University of Miami Medical School, completed her three year pediatric medicine residency in July and is now in now working in the practice that nurtured her father as a child and employed her mother as the young doctor that she is now.

When asked about his interest in becoming a doctor, Fletcher Paschal IV, said: "No. I'll stick to computers."

His twin sister, Paschal Thomas, was asked about her mother's influence in her decision to pursue pediatric medicine, and promptly replied: "She had something to do with it. I considered other fields but pediatrics worked its way to the top."

Paschal had another set of reasons for pursuing pediatric medicine.

"I enjoyed science. A lot of my professors encouraged me to go to medical school. During medical school you do rotations through different specialties. I found it refreshing to have children running around. So pediatrics was a good fit for me."