

# North Carolina-Born Actress, Sadie Delany Dies In Raleigh At 109

By Staff

Sarah L. "Sadie" Delany, affectionately known as Miss "Sadie" who, along with her sister Bessie, co-authored two best-selling books on their triumphs over Jim Crow and secrets of long life, died Monday Jan. 25th in Raleigh.

"We've lost a legend in the community," said historian Linda Simmons-Henry, who has documented the accomplishments of African-Americans in North Carolina for several years. "Sadie gained a lot of her education here, spent her early years here and made quite an impact."

With her younger sister, Dr. Annie Elizabeth "Bessie" Delany, a dentist, Sadie Delany became a national celebrity in 1993 when they published their first book, an oral history called "Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years."

"She was a very fine lady, very sweet and very industrious," said Nan Delany, one of her nieces who lives in Raleigh. "She considered Raleigh as a home, although she had not lived here for a long time."

Sadie Delany was born in Raleigh in 1889. She grew up with her nine brothers and sisters on the campus of St. Augustine's College, where their father, Henry Bernard Delany, was also active at the college.

Delany Drive, a street near St.

Augustine's connecting Glascock Street and Milburnie Road, is named for the family.

After graduating from St. Augustine's, the sisters moved to New York. In 1926, Sadie earned a master's degree in education from Columbia University and became the first black high school home economics teacher in New York City. Bessie went on to become the second black woman in New York City to practice dentistry.

The sisters hung out with well-known figures of the Harlem Renaissance including poet Langston Hughes and writer Countee Cullen.

Neither of the sisters married, and they often said that it was one of the reasons for their long lives. Bessie, the more outspoken of the two, often put it this way: "We never had husbands to worry us to death."

The sisters first book came about as a result of a New York Times article that detailed their spunk and wisdom. It was published in 1991.

The award-winning memoir "Having Our Say" was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 19 months, sold more than 900,000 copies and has been translated into four languages. It became a Broadway play in 1995.

The sisters appeared on a number of television shows and shared their tales about how they endured a segregated south at the beginning of the century and went on to become black profes-

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sionals. Bessie Delany died in 1995 at the age of 104.

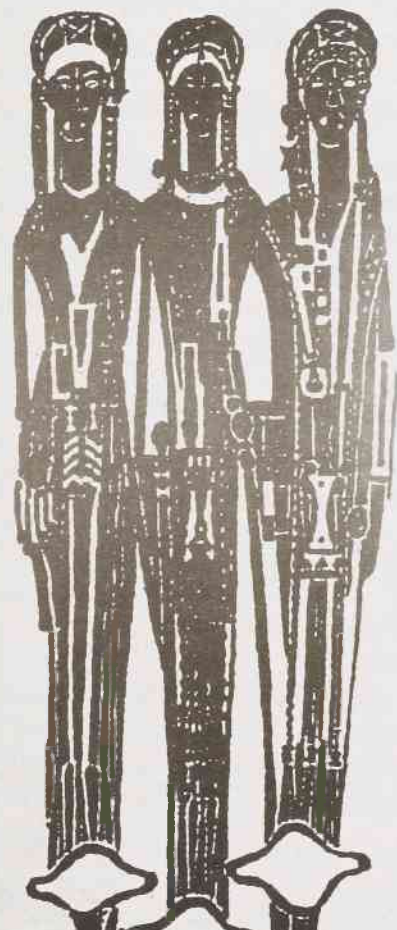
Sadie Delany continued living at their Mount Vernon, N.Y. home with assistance from relatives, and penned a third book, "On My Own at 107: Reflections on Life Without Bessie."

Tazewell Thompson, who directed "Having our Say" at Playmakers Theatre in Chapel Hill, said the Delanys'

story will have added significance because of Miss Sadie's passing.

"Sadie was more the momma's child, very calm and agreeable," he said. "When I think about her today, it's not a sad day. It's a cause for celebration because she can be reunited with her sister."

Ms. Delany is survived by 16 nieces and nephews.



## "Ovuomaroro" Latest ECSU Art Gallery Exhibit

"Ovuomaroro," an art exhibit featuring the work of Obomeyoma, Bruce Onobrakpeya, and his four assistants, was featured in the Elizabeth City State University Art Gallery throughout February during Black History Month.

The show opened with a reception and gallery talk that was attended by about 100 people on Friday, Jan. 20. The gallery talk was given by Mr. Richard A. Singletary, a Portsmouth, Va. based historian, who is completing his Ph.D. dissertation on the work and Orhobo culture of Mr. Onobrakpeya and his assistants.

The work "transcends culture and is a natural synthesizer of life on the continent," said Mr. Singletary.

Professor Alexis Joyner of the ECSU Art Department spear-headed the effort to bring the exhibit to the campus. The show, which featured more than 40 works by Mr. Onobrakpeya, represents a kind of homecoming for the artist.

"I think that it's like coming home," Mr. Joyner said. "He did his Fulbright here in 1978. Since that time he's continued to be very active and has become world renowned." Mr. Onobrakpeya and his assistants work in the Ovuomaroro Art Gallery and Studio located between

the industrial and residential areas of Mushin in Lagos, Nigeria.

Mr. Joyner says that one of the major aims of the show, which features more than 40 works from Mr. Singletary's personal collection and others on loan from the artist, is to widen the audience and reception for Africa and African art.

"I think one of the most important things that should come out of the show is a broadening of the narrow vision that we (Americans) have of African art, Mr. Joyner said. "When we think of African art, all too often we think only about tribal things - the mask and sculpture."

"This brother and his assistants are showing us some things that are alive and kicking in contemporary art," he added/

Fellow art professor Drusiano Scerbo said the exhibit is one that all of the students at the University should see because of its artistic merit and cultural importance.

"The work is important because it reflects African culture in any aspect of life and because it comes from within the person, the artist," Scerbo said. "The whole feeling of the work should be important for students."