

Namesake Bio: Selena Sloan Butler

Native Georgian Selena Sloan Butler (1872-1964) organized the first National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers (NCCPT) and cofounded the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, now known as the National Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

Before reaching these milestones, Butler attended a missionary-operated elementary school in Thomas County, Ga., which led her to Spelman Seminary – now known as Spelman College. Upon graduating from college, Butler went on to teach English at African American schools in Atlanta. Additionally, she organized the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the Atlanta YWCA; served on the Committee of Education and Training of the Infant and Preschool Child; and later, became the first president of the Georgia Federation of Colored Women's Clubs.



Perhaps Butler's most recognized accomplishment, however, is her creation of the first chapter of the NCCPT at Yonge Street Elementary School in Atlanta in 1911, banding chapters across the state until they became the Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. The chapter merged with the white Parent-Teacher Association in 1970 to form the current National PTA.***

Butler believed all children should have the opportunity to succeed and learn, regardless of their race or background. For her contributions, Selena S. Butler Park was named in her honor on Feb. 13, 1966, and was rededicated on June 25, 2009 during the annual convention of the National PTA. In addition, she was officially inducted into the Georgia Women of Achievement in 1995.

She is buried next to her husband, Henry Rutherford Butler, in Atlanta's Historic Oakland Cemetery.



*** As a testament to her role in forming the National PTA, current PTA leaders worked to raise money for a mosaic tile installation in the revitalized Butler Park. Forty tiles representing parks, green spaces and Mrs. Butler herself were made by The Intown Academy, Hope Hill Elementary and Cook Elementary School students and placed into a permanent wall area for visitors to enjoy.