Dr. W. Locke Robinson (Dr. Locke) May 24, 1903-December 18, 1956

Born May 24, 1903 in Ivy Community of Madison County, one of nine children of James Ellis and Ida Anderson Robinson.
Graduated high school at age 16
Attended Mars Hill College
Carson-Newman College A.B., 1921
Wake Forest College B.S., 1923
Medical College of Virginia M.D., 1927 (youngest member of his class)
County Physician (Madison), 1929
Worked with Dr. W.F. Robinson at Mars Hill College from 1930 (later became College Physician for many years.)
Married Eula Mae Grove of Jefferson City TN June 30, 1930
Three children: Locke Jr. (died in infancy)
Arthur Grove (died Dec 2, 2002)
Patricia Robinson Guy
5 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren
Eula Robinson died July 4, 1992

Dr. Locke, as he was affectionately called, was widely beloved throughout Madison County. He served on the State Board of Conservation and Development during the early part of Gov. Kerr Scott’s tenure and worked vigorously for better schools and roads for Madison County. He was active in politics in his spare time and served on the Mars Hill Board of Aldermen. He served on the board of trustees of Mars Hill College and on the board of deacons of the Mars Hill Baptist Church. He was president of the Madison County Medical Society and was a member of the American Medical Association. Dr. Locke was a charter member and former officer of the Mars Hill Civitan Club.

For many years Dr. Locke’s medical office was in an old Victorian style house on Main Street (next to the current Mars Hill College Bookstore). Patients would wait to see him sitting in rocking chairs on the front porch of the old house. Stacked neatly on the porch could often be found stacks of flour sacks that patients would bring for Mrs. Locke to sew into beautiful dresses for daughter, Patricia. The office was managed efficiently by Miss Mary Lee Rice, and Miss Irene Willis R.N. was Dr. Locke’s able assistant. Dr. Locke and Mr. Charles Bruce co-owned the Mars Hill Pharmacy located across Main Street from the office. They enjoyed hunting and fishing together when their schedules allowed.

When patients were unable to come to town to see Dr. Locke, he would drive up into the mountain communities to treat them, often traveling for days at a time without coming home. If phone service were not available they would tie a kerchief on their rural mailbox to indicate that medical attention was needed. Many times the patients could not pay money for the medical services, but the Robinson family never wanted for eggs, meats and vegetables. On one occasion when Dr. Locke stayed several days with a family after a very difficult delivery of twin babies, the proud and relieved father took down a clock from the wall in his home and presented it to Dr. Locke. On more than one
occasion babies were named after Dr. Locke as payment for medical services rendered. Mrs. Locke endured lots of teasing about the number of children named after her husband!

Upon returning from days of house calls and before eating or getting much-needed rest, Dr. Locke would sit down at his piano and play “Rock of Ages” over and over until he was ready to receive his family. He never had a formal music lesson, but his rendition of this old gospel hymn was truly wonderful. How appropriate that it was sung at his funeral.

Dr. Locke was generous with his time and money. He was there to give unselfishly of his talents to those in need. One of his favorite things to do was to pay for roofs on churches throughout the rural areas.

Dr. Locke was forced to retire in 1952 because of ill health. He died at the age of 53 on December 18, 1956 in a Richmond, Va. Hospital. His life was short, but his contribution to the health and well-being of the people of Mars Hill and Madison County will be remembered and appreciated for generations to come.