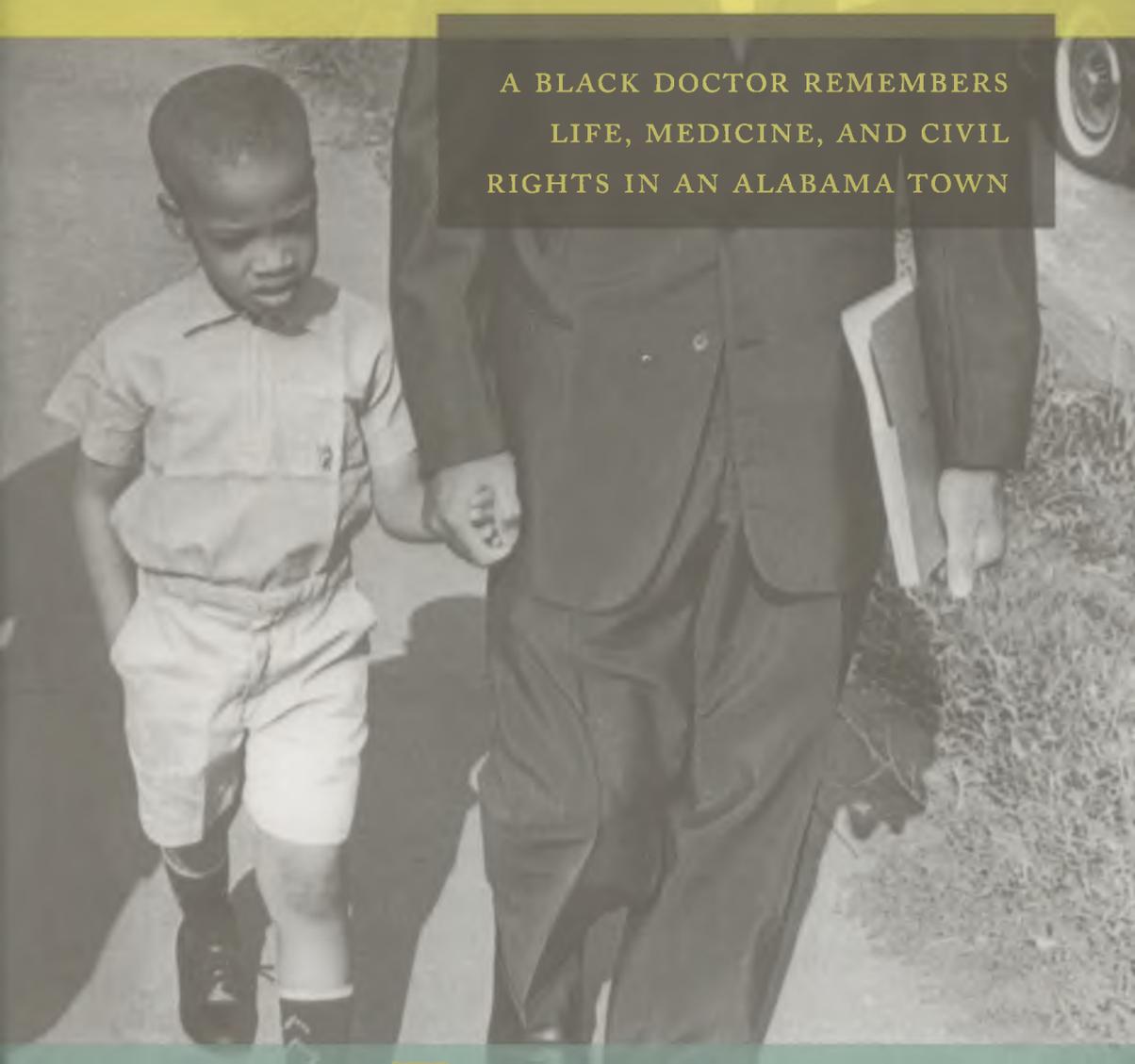


SONNIE WELLINGTON
HEREFORD III AND
JACK D. ELLIS

beside *the* troubled waters



A BLACK DOCTOR REMEMBERS
LIFE, MEDICINE, AND CIVIL
RIGHTS IN AN ALABAMA TOWN

Beside the Troubled Waters

A Black Doctor Remembers
Life, Medicine, and Civil
Rights in an Alabama Town

SONNIE WELLINGTON HEREFORD III
AND JACK D. ELLIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA PRESS
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Cover: Dr. Sonnie Wellington Hereford III and six-year-old Sonnie Hereford IV leave Huntsville's Fifth Avenue Elementary School on September 6, 1963, minutes after being turned away by state troopers dispatched by Gov. George Wallace. Taken by an anonymous photographer, who sent the print to Dr. Hereford several months after the 1963 integration.

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“Dr. Hereford’s ‘as told to’ autobiography is a fine, quick read that covers significant aspects of African American social history, the history of the Civil Rights Movement, and medical history. As Dr. Ellis notes in the introduction, Hereford certainly can tell a story. . . . This is an important book. It deserves a wide and intelligent readership.”

—Gregory Michael Dorr, author of
Segregation’s Science: Eugenics and Society in Virginia

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Beside the Troubled Waters is a memoir by an African American physician in Alabama whose story in many ways typifies the lives and careers of black doctors in the South during the segregationist era while also illustrating the diversity of the black experience in the medical profession. Based on interviews conducted over ten years by Jack D. Ellis, the account includes Hereford's childhood and youth as the son of a black sharecropper and Primitive Baptist minister in Madison County, Alabama, during the Depression; his education at Huntsville's all-black Councill School and medical training at Meharry Medical College in Nashville; his medical practice in Huntsville's black community beginning in 1956; his efforts to overcome the racism he met in the white medical community; his participation in the civil rights movement in Huntsville; and his later problems with the Medicaid program and state medical authorities, which eventually led to the loss of his license in 1993.

Hereford's memoir provides valuable insight into the south's medical and civil rights histories, and contains a compelling and painful account of the professional ruin Hereford encountered after 37 years of practice, as the end of segregation and the federal role in medical care placed black doctors in competition with white ones for the first time.

Sonnie Wellington Hereford III is a retired physician and civil rights leader who has taught at Alabama A&M University and Calhoun Community College.

Jack D. Ellis is a Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Alabama in Huntsville and author of *The Physician-Legislators of France: Medicine and Politics in the Early Third Republic, 1870–1914*.

Front Cover Image: Dr. Sonnie Wellington Hereford III and six-year-old Sonnie Hereford IV leave Huntsville's Fifth Avenue Elementary School on September 6, 1963, minutes after being turned away by state troopers dispatched by Gov. George Wallace. Taken by an anonymous photographer, who sent the print to Dr. Hereford several months after the 1963 integration. Jacket design by Erin Bradley Dangar/Dangar Design.