

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Samuel DuBois Cook

PERSON

Cook, Samuel DuBois, 1928-2017

Alternative Names: Samuel DuBois Cook;

Life Dates: November 21, 1928-May 30, 2017

Place of Birth: Griffin, Georgia, USA

Residence: Atlanta, GA

Occupations: Political Science Professor; University President

Biographical Note

Retired Dillard University president and the first African American professor at Duke University, Samuel DuBois Cook, was born on November 21, 1928, in Griffin, Georgia. Cook's parents were Mary Beatrice Daniel Cook and the Reverend M.E. Cook, a Baptist minister who instilled a passion for education in all of his children; this upbringing had a deep impact on Cook. Cook was given his middle name in honor of former Morehouse College president Dr. Charles DuBois Hubert. Cook attended Griffin Vocational High School and graduated from there in 1944; he went on to earn an A.B. degree in history from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, where he met and was mentored by Dr. Benjamin Mays. Cook then attended Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, where he earned his M.A. degree in political science and his Ph.D. in 1954.

Cook started his professional career as a teacher after a short stint in the U.S. Army; he taught political science at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1955. Cook then moved to Atlanta University where he began teaching in 1956, and became politically active. Cook worked on black voter registration and served as youth director of the NAACP of Georgia. During his career, Cook taught at other colleges and universities including the University of Illinois, University of California – Los Angeles, and Duke University, where he became the University's first African American professor. Cook was also the first African American to hold a regular faculty appointment at a predominantly white university in the South. In 1974, Cook was chosen as president of Dillard University; he filled this role for twenty-two years, retiring in 1997. Cook was credited with beginning the modernization of Dillard University's infrastructure.

In 1993, Dillard University honored Cook by naming the school's new fine arts and

communication center after him. That same year, Cook was elected by Duke University's Board of Trustees as a Trustee Emeritus. Duke University again honored Cook with the establishment of the Samuel DuBois Cook Society 1997; the society aims to celebrate and support African American students at the university through programming and scholarships. In 2006, Duke University established a postdoctoral fellowship in Cook's name to support social scientists that study issues related to race, ethnicity, and gender. In 2015, Duke dedicated the Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity in his honor. Though retired, Cook remained a visiting scholar and lecturer at universities around the United States.

Cook passed away on May 30, 2017 at the age of 88.

Related Entries

Griffin Vocational High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Cabin Creek School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Spring Hill School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Morehouse College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

The Ohio State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Political Science

Southern University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1955 to 1956]

Professor of Political Science

Atlanta University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1956 to ?]

Professor

Duke University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1966 to 1974]

Professor

Dillard University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1997]

President

NAACP [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Youth Director

Joseph E. Lowery Institute for Justice and Human Rights [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Chair

Southern Political Science Association [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Duke University Board of Trustees [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Trustee Emeritus