

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jemadari Kamara

PERSON

Kamara, Jemadari

**Alternative Names:** Jemadari Kamara;

**Life Dates:** November 25, 1948-

**Place of Birth:** Detroit, Michigan, USA

**Residence:** Brockton, MA

**Work:** Boston, MA

**Occupations:** African American Studies Professor; Education Administrator

## Biographical Note

Educator Jemadari Omowale Kamara was born William Cyrus Swan, II on November 25, 1948, in Detroit, Michigan to Elizabeth and Edward McCallan Swan. Kamara graduated from Western Reserve Academy boarding school in 1967, and received his B.A. degree in political science, sociology, and African Studies from Tufts University in 1972. He later obtained his Ph.D. degree in technological and environmental planning from the University of Michigan in 1983. Kamara also attended Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

In the early 1970s, Kamara was hired in a faculty position at Brandeis University in Boston, Massachusetts, where he remained until 1975. In 1980, he served for two years as the director of the William Monroe Trotter House at the University of Michigan. Kamara then became assistant professor and chairman of the African and Afro-American Studies Department at the University of Michigan Flint, where he remained until 1988. From 1985 to 1987, he served as a Fulbright Scholar at the Universite Nationale du Benin in West Africa; and, in 1988, as the Development Consultant for the Societe Africaine de Technologie Approprie et Developpement (S.A.T.A.D) in Cotonou, Benin.

Kamara returned to the United States in 1988 and was hired as dean of the College of Public and Community Service at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He served as chairman of the University's Africana Studies Department from 1996 to 2001; and then again in 2007, 2008 and 2011. In 1999, Kamara became the founding director of the Center for African, Caribbean and Community Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston; and, from 2001 to 2002, was a Senior Fulbright Professor at the

Universite Gaston Berger in Saint-Louis, Senegal.

In the 1990s, Kamara helped to found and continues to coordinate the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. / Amilcar Cabral Commemorative Program. Also, he collaborated in developing the Community Action Information Network (CAIN), which assisted community-based organizations in applying technology and data-based information to community-defined purposes for development. In addition, Kamara serves as an international coordinator for the Youth Education and Sports (YES) with Africa Program, which has served nearly 3,000 African youth.

Among Kamara's numerous publications include *State of the Race – Creating Our 21st Century* (co-editor and contributor, 2004), which won the Charshee McIntyre Award and was named the African Heritage Studies Association's Outstanding Book of the Year. He was also editor of *Socially Responsible Investment and Economic Development* (1987).

Kamara served as a senior advisor to the Boston Pan-African Forum, Treasurer of the West African Research Association and on the board of directors of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century. He is the father of two children.

Jemadari Kamara was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 11, 2007 and October 10, 2012.

## Related Entries

**Tufts University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**University of Michigan** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Ph. D.**

**Center for African, Caribbean, and Community Development** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1999 to ?]

**Founding Director**