

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Johnny Houston

PERSON

Houston, Johnny , 1941-

**Alternative Names:** Houston, Johnny , 1941-;

**Life Dates:** November 19, 1941-

**Place of Birth:** Sandersville (Washington County), Georgia

**Residence:** Elizabeth City, NC

**Occupations:** Mathematician

## Biographical Note

Mathematician, education administrator, and research director Johnny L. Houston was born on November 19, 1941 in Sandersville, Georgia to parents Catherine Houston Vinson and Bobby Lee Harris. After graduating from Ballard Hudson High School in Macon, Georgia in 1960, Houston went on to earn his B.A. degree in mathematics from Morehouse College in 1964 and his M.S. degree in mathematics from Atlanta University (Clark Atlanta University) in 1966. Houston studied at the Université de Strasbourg in Strasbourg, France from 1966 to 1967. He then earned his Ph.D. degree in mathematics from Purdue University in 1974.

In 1974, Houston joined the faculty at Savannah State University; and, in 1975, he was appointed as the chair of the Atlanta University Math and Computer Science Department. During his leave from the University, he served as the Calloway Professor of Computer Science at Fort Valley State University. In 1984, Houston was appointed the vice chancellor of academic affairs and professor of math and computer science at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU). He was named senior research professor in the ECSU Department of Mathematics and Computer Science in 1988. Throughout his

career, Houston has held several positions as a specialist in mathematics and computer science. He served as a member of the National Institute of Health's MARC Committee from 1980 to 1986; a member of the Board of Governors of the Mathematical Association of America from 1992 to 1995; and, a member of the Human Resource Advisory Group for the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute from 1993 to 1998. In 1996, Houston established the Computational Science and Scientific Visualization (CSSV) Center at ECSU; and, in 2002, he established the African Studies Program (TLMP) at ECSU. Houston served as the director of both programs until 2008. Houston is co-founder of the National Association of Mathematicians, Inc. (NAM), and served as NAM's executive secretary from 1975 until 2000. Throughout his professional career, Houston has authored more than forty books and articles in the fields of science, mathematics, and education, including "The History of NAM, the First 30 Years; 1969-1999" (2002). He has given scholarly presentations, or traveled, on six continents, more than fifty countries – twenty-five in Africa- as well as throughout the United States. Houston received more than \$15 million in grant funding to support his scholarly work.

Houston has received many recognitions, including, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors Teaching Excellence Award in 1996; NAM's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999; and, the Purdue University BCC Pioneer Award in 2009. He has also been included in biographical listings of well-known scientists, such as "American Men and Women of Science," "Who's Who Among Black Americans," "Who's Who in America," and the "World Directory of Mathematicians". In 2010, Houston was named professor emeritus at Elizabeth City State University after twenty-six years of service.

Houston married Virginia Lawrence of Macon, Georgia. They have two daughters: Dr. Mave Talibra Houston and Kaiulani Michelle Houston.

Mathematician, education administrator, and research director Johnny L. Houston was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 25, 2013.

## Related Entries

**Harris, Lucinda** [GRANDCHILD OF]  
**Paternal Grandmother**

**Harris, Nolan** [GRANDCHILD OF]  
**Paternal Grandfather**

**Poole, Katie Harris** [HALF-SIBLING OF]  
**Half-Sister**

**Harris, Bobby Lee** [CHILD OF]

**Father**

**Houston, Richard** [GRANDCHILD<sub>OF</sub>]

**Maternal Grandfather**

**(Heard) Houston, Ruth** [GRANDCHILD<sub>OF</sub>]

**Maternal Grandmother**

**Vinson, Clifford** [STEPCHILD<sub>OF</sub>]

**Step-father**

**Houston, Dr. Mave T.** [PARENT<sub>OF</sub>]

**Daughter**

**Harris, Bobby Lee, Jr.** [HALF-SIBLING<sub>OF</sub>]

**Half-Brother**

**Houston, Kaiulni M.** [PARENT<sub>OF</sub>]

**Daughter**

**Houston, Joe Willie** [SIBLING<sub>OF</sub>]

**Brother**

**Chappell, Barbara Harris** [HALF-SIBLING<sub>OF</sub>]

**Half-Sister**

**Mitchelle, Jackie Harris** [HALF-SIBLING<sub>OF</sub>]

**Half-Sister**

**Duggan, Nolene Harris** [HALF-SIBLING<sub>OF</sub>]

**Half-Sister**

**(Vinson) Houston, Catherine** [CHILD<sub>OF</sub>]

**Mother**

**Harris, Thomas Watson** [HALF-SIBLING<sub>OF</sub>]

**Half-Brother**

**Houston, Sarah Ruth** [SIBLING<sub>OF</sub>]

**Sister**

**Colley, Christine Houston** [SIBLING<sub>OF</sub>]

**Sister**

**Purdue University** [STUDENT<sub>OF</sub>]

[from ? to 1974-08]

**Ph.D.**

**Atlanta University** [STUDENT<sub>OF</sub>]

[from ? to 1966-08]

**M.S.**

**Morehouse College** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to 1964-05]

**B.A.**

**Ballard-Hudson High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to 1960-06]

**Diploma**

**Universite de Strasbourg** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to 1967]

**University of Georgia** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to 1969-08]

**Elizabeth City State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2010-05 to ?]

**Professor emeritus**

**E.E. Smith High School** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1964-08 to 1965-05]

**High School Math Teacher**

**Stillman College** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1967-08 to 1969-05]

**College Math Instructor**

**Savannah State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1974-08 to 1975-05]

**University Professor**

**Atlanta University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1975-08 to 1984-05]

**University Professor/Department Chair**

**Fort Valley State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1981-08 to 1984-06]

**University Professor/Chair**

**Elizabeth City State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1984-08 to 2010-05]

**Senior Research Professor/Vice Chair**

**American Mathematical Society** [MEMBEROF]

**Association for Computing Machinery** [MEMBEROF]

**Benjamin Banneker Association** [MEMBEROF]

**Mathematics Association of American** [MEMBEROF]  
**Life Member**

**National Association of Mathematicians** [MEMBEROF]  
**Founder**

**National Council for the Teaching of Mathematics** [MEMBEROF]

**Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics** [MEMBEROF]  
**Life Member**

**Association of Comp. & Inf./Eng. Dept.-Minority Institutions** [MEMBEROF]  
**2nd Vice President**

**Mathematical Sciences Research Institute** [MEMBEROF]  
**Human Resources Advisory Committee**

**North Carolina Computer Center** [MEMBEROF]  
**Advisory Committee**

**Purdue University Mathematics Department** [MEMBEROF]  
**Advisory Committee**