

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Andrew F. Brimmer

PERSON

Brimmer, Andrew F.

Alternative Names: Andrew F. Brimmer;

Life Dates: September 13, 1926-October 27, 2012

Place of Birth: Newellton, Louisiana, USA

Work: Washington, DC

Occupations: Economist

Biographical Note

Economist, academic and business leader Andrew F. Brimmer was born in Newellton, Louisiana, on September 13, 1926. The son of sharecroppers who had been driven off of the land by boll weevils, Brimmer attended local racially segregated elementary and high schools. Upon graduation, Brimmer moved to Bremerton, Washington, with an older sister and worked in a navy yard as an electrician's helper. In 1945, Brimmer was drafted into the Army, where he served until November 1946. After completing his military service, Brimmer enrolled in the University of Washington, where he earned his B.A. degree in economics in 1950. In 1951, after receiving his M.A. degree, Brimmer won a Fulbright grant to study in India. In 1952, Brimmer enrolled in Harvard, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1957.

While working on his doctorate, Brimmer went to work for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York as an economist. While working with the Federal Reserve Bank, Brimmer traveled to Khartoum, Sudan, to help the country establish a central bank. During the John F. Kennedy administration, Brimmer became assistant secretary of economic affairs in the U.S. Department of Commerce, and served until 1966. That same year Brimmer began an eight-and-a-half year term on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; while filling this role, he became the first African American governor of the Federal Reserve. In 1974, Brimmer left to take a post at Harvard University, where he stayed for two years. Upon leaving Harvard, Brimmer formed his own consulting company, Brimmer & Co.

Brimmer was elected to the Washington Academy of Sciences in 1991, largely as a result of his published works on the nature and importance of central banking systems. Brimmer served as vice president of the American Economic Association and president of the Eastern Economics Association; he also served

as the president of the North American Economics and Finance Association, in addition to serving on a number of other corporate boards of directors.

Brimmer passed away on October 7, 2012 at age 86.

Related Entries

Federal Reserve Bank of New York [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from ? to ?]

Economist

United States Department of Commerce [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 2001 to 2005]

Assistant Secretary of Economic Affairs

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1988 to 1991]

Harvard University [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1974 to 1976]

Brimmer & Co. [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1976 to ?]

Founder

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1997 to ?]

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1999 to ?]

Vice Chairman