

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Theophilus Caviness

PERSON

Caviness, Theophilus, 1928-

Alternative Names: Reverend Theophilus Caviness;

Life Dates: May 23, 1928-

Place of Birth: Marshall, Texas, USA

Work: Cleveland, OH

Occupations: Pastor

Biographical Note

Renowned pastor and civic leader the Reverend Emmitt Theophilus Caviness was born on May 23, 1928 in Marshall Texas. His parents were Lula Page and Will Stone Caviness. Reverend Caviness earned a bachelor's of arts degree from Bishop College in Dallas, Texas. He also holds a bachelor's of divinity from Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Grove,

Missouri; an honorary doctorate of divinity from Virginia Seminary and College, and an honorary doctorate in law from Central State University in Ohio.

Caviness has served as the spiritual leader of several congregations, including St. Mark's Baptist Church in Picton, Texas; Mount Nebo Baptist Church in Madison, Illinois; and St. Paul Baptist Church in East St. Louis, Illinois. Since 1961, he has served as senior pastor of the Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio's Glenville Community. He has also been both a member and officer in the Baptist Minister's Conference of Cleveland and Vicinity, the Baptist Pastor's Council, the Planning Board of the Inter-Church Council, the Ohio Baptist General Convention, and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.

Caviness has a long history of involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. He currently serves as the president of the Cleveland Branch of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and is a former member of the Board of Directors for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Ohio Civil Rights Commission.

In addition to his work in the religious community, he served on the Executive Board of the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, the Zoning Board of Appeals for the City of Cleveland, the Planning Board of the Glenville Area Council, and the Sewer Board of Cleveland. He also worked as the executive assistant to George V. Voinovich, former mayor of Cleveland.

Reverend Caviness was married for forty-one years to concert recording artist and minister of music, James ("Jamie") Pitts Caviness. He currently resides in Bratenahl, Ohio.

Related Entries

Bishop College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Eden Theological Seminary [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

bachelor's of divinity

St. Mark's Baptist Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Pastor

Mount Nebo Baptist Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1965 to 1973]

Pastor

St. Paul Baptist Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1984 to 1985]

Pastor

Ohio Civil Rights Commission [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

City of Cleveland [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Executive Assistant

Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1961 to ?]

Senior Pastor

Southern Christian Leadership Conference [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Branch Leader

National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc. [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Baptist Ministers Council of Cleveland and Vicinity

[MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

President