

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with David Levering Lewis

PERSON

Lewis, David Levering, 1936-

**Alternative Names:** David Levering Lewis;

**Life Dates:** May 25, 1936-

**Place of Birth:** Little Rock, Arkansas, USA

**Residence:** Shelburne Falls, MA

**Occupations:** Historian; History Professor

## Biographical Note

Pulitzer Prize winning historian David Levering Lewis was born on May 25, 1936, in Little Rock, Arkansas. Lewis's father, Yale educated theologian John Henry Lewis, Sr., was the principal of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School and his mother was a high school math teacher. After attending parochial school in Little Rock, Lewis went to Wilberforce Preparatory School and Xenia High School, both in Ohio. Moving to Atlanta, Georgia, Lewis attended Booker T. Washington High School until he was admitted to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, on a four year Ford Foundation Early Entrants scholarship. Graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Fisk University in 1956, Lewis then attended the University of Michigan Law School, but eventually earned his M.A. degree in history from Columbia University in 1959. Lewis earned his Ph.D. degree in modern European and French history from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1962.

After serving in the United States Army, Lewis lectured on medieval history at the University of Ghana in 1963. Lewis taught at Howard University, Cornell University, the University of Notre Dame, Harvard University, and the University of California, San Diego, before joining Rutgers University in 1985 as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Professor of History. In 2003, Lewis was appointed Julius Silver University Professor and Professor of History at New York University.

Winner of two Pulitzer Prizes for his biographies of W.E.B. DuBois, Lewis also won the Bancroft Prize and the Francis Parkman Prize. Lewis received fellowships from the Center for Advanced Study of Behavioral Sciences; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation; the American Philosophical Society; the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Lewis

also served as a trustee of the National Humanities Center; the commissioner of the National Portrait Gallery; and a former senator of Phi Beta Kappa. A former president of the Society of American Historians (2002-2003), Lewis serves on the board of the NAACP's The Crisis magazine.

## Related Entries

**Wilberforce Preparatory School, Xenia High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Xeina High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

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

**London School of Economics** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Professor**

**University of Ghana** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Professor**

**University of California San Diego** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Professor**

**New York University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Professor**

**Rutgers University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Professor**

**University of the District of Columbia** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Professor**

**American Historical Society** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**President**

