

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Julian Marvin Swain

PERSON

Swain, Julian

Alternative Names: Julian Marvin Swain;

Life Dates: December 8, 1924-April 19, 2011

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Chicago, Illinois

Work: Chicago, Illinois

Occupations: Dancer; Choreographer

Biographical Note

Dancer, choreographer, and entertainer Julian Marvin Swain was born on December 18, 1924 in Chicago, Illinois. Raised by his mother, Sarah Elizabeth Davis Swain, he attended Stephen A. Douglas Elementary School and Wendell Phillips High School. At Chicago's Southside Community Arts Center, Swain met artists like Margaret Goss Burroughs and Gordon Parks and took lessons with dancers Lester Goodman, Lucille Ellis, Wilbert Bradley, Sammy Dyer, Tommy Gomez and Jimmy Payne. Swain performed with Carmencita Romero in the Annual Artists Ball at the Savoy. In 1940, Swain traveled with Romero and danced in Toronto before learning about African dance in New York from Senegal's Assadata Dafora.

Returning to Chicago, Swain worked as one of choreographer Lon Fontaine's "Beige Beaus" at the Beige Room. Swain then became choreographer and lead dancer at Chicago's Club DeLisa, but gained his greatest notoriety as a member of the Co-Op Trio with Peter Green and Ann Henry. The Co-Ops performed with top acts like Count Basie and in venues like Larry Steele's Club Harlem in Atlantic City, New Jersey and Arthur Bragg's Idlewild Review in Michigan. In the 1960s, Swain continued to perform ballet and modern and ethnic dance and in 1971, he formed the Julian Swain Inner City Dance Theatre at Malcolm X College.

As a singer and actor Swain has performed in various musical reviews and revivals including Okoro Harold Johnson's Don't Get Around Much Anymore, Randall Johnson's Le Stardust Revue, A Tribute to Duke Ellington, Chuck Hoenes' Best of the Hit Paraders and Sugar. Featured in the The Blues Brothers, Swain also performed in Carlos Santana and Michelle Branch's "The Game of Love" video. A dance panelist for

the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, Swain also participates in Dance Africa. A recipient of the Black Theatre Alliance Award, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley honored Swain with the 2004 Chicago Senior Citizen Award.

Related Entries

Wendell Phillips Academy High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

John J. Pershing West Middle School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Douglas Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Malcolm X College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Barat College [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Roosevelt University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Truman College [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Malcom X College [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Columbia College Chicago [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Dance panelist