

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Janet Angel MacLachlan

PERSON

MacLachlan, Janet

Alternative Names: Janet Angel MacLachlan; Janet Angel MacLachlan

Life Dates: August 27, 1933-October 11, 2010

Place of Birth: New York, New York, USA

Residence: Los Angeles, CA

Occupations: Stage Actress; Film Actress

Biographical Note

Stage and film actress Janet Angel MacLachlan was born on August 8, 1933, in Harlem, New York; her mother, Iris South MacLachlan, and father, James MacLachlan, were both Jamaican born and members of the Church of the Illumination. Attending P.S. 170 and Julia Ward Junior High School, MacLachlan graduated from Julia Richmond High School in 1950, and earned her B.S. degree in psychology from Hunter College in 1955. While holding down clerical jobs MacLachlan studied acting at the Harlem YMCA, the Herbert Berghoff Acting Studio, and the Little Theatre of Harlem. Later, MacLachlan received additional training from The Actors Studio, Joanie Gerber Voiceovers, and Theatre East in Los Angeles.

In 1961, MacLachlan took Cicely Tyson's place in *The Blacks: A Clown Show* by Jean Genet, and worked alongside James Earl Jones, Louis Gossett, Jr., Maya Angelou, and Roscoe Lee Brown. In 1962, MacLachlan was cast in the parody *Raising Hell in the Sun* and became active in Actors Equity and The Committee for the Employment of Negro Performers. MacLachlan spent a year at Minneapolis' Tyrone Guthrie Theater and acted in Washington, D.C.'s Shakespeare Festival before she signed a contract with Universal Studios in 1964. Starting with *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour* in 1965, MacLachlan appeared in over seventy-five television shows, including: *I Spy* (1967), *The FBI* (1966), *Star Trek* (1967), *The Fugitive* (1966), *The Name of the Game* (1969/70), *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970), *The Rockford Files* (1975), *Good Times* (1978), *Archie Bunker's Place* (1980), *Cagney and Lacey* (1982/83), *Amen* (1988), *Murder She Wrote* (1985), *Murder One* (1986), *Family Law* (2000), and *Alias* (2002). MacLachlan's television movies included: *Louis Armstrong - Chicago Style* (1976), *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* (1978), *The Sophisticated Gents* (1981), *For Us the Living: The Medgar Evers Story* (1983), and *The Tuskegee Airmen* (1995). MacLachlan's feature films included: *Up Tight* (1968), *...tick...tick...tick* (1970), *The*

Man (1972), Sounder (1972), Tightrope (1984) and Black Listed (2003).

Often cast as a judge, nurse, doctor, psychiatrist, teacher, or social worker, MacLachlan was also featured in the Emmy Award winning KCET-TV PBS production of *Voices of Our People: In Celebration of Black Poetry*. MacLachlan served as the grant committee chair of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, while remaining a resident of Los Angeles.

Janet MacLachlan passed away on October 11, 2010.

Related Entries

Julia Richman High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

H.S.

Julia Ward Howe Junior High School 81 [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

P.S. 170 [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Hunter College [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

B.A.

St. Mark's Playhouse [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Actress

New York Life Insurance Company [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1950 to 1950]

Special Markets, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1955 to 1956]

Guthrie Theater [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1962 to 1963]

Actress

Universal Studios [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1964 to ?]

Actress

Committee for the Employment of Negro Performers [MEMBEROF]

[from 1961 to ?]

Member

Screen Actors Guild [MEMBEROF]

[from 1970 to ?]

Board Member

Television Academy of Arts and Sciences [MEMBEROF]

[from 1980 to ?]

Board Member

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences [MEMBEROF]

[from 1980 to ?]

Committee Member