

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Khephra Burns

PERSON

Burns, Khephra

Alternative Names: Khephra Burns; Burns, Keith

Life Dates: October 2, 1950-

Place of Birth: Los Angeles, California, USA

Residence: New York, NY

Occupations: Author

Biographical Note

Author, fiction writer, and scriptwriter Khephra Burns was born October 2, 1950 in Los Angeles, California, to Isham and Treneta Cecelia Burns. In 1972, Burns received his bachelor's degree in English literature and drama from the University of California at Santa Barbara, after which he moved to New York to launch his writing career.

In 1978, Burns joined the staff of PBS television affiliate WNET-Thirteen as a writer and associate

producer. Burns remained associated with PBS and educational programming, producing documentaries about different aspects of the African American experience. Burns's body of work includes several acclaimed books, including *Black Stars in Orbit*, *Mansa Musa*, and *Confirmation: The Spiritual Wisdom that has Shaped Our Lives*, which he wrote with his wife, writer and editor Susan Taylor. Burns also contributed to several monthly publications including *Essence*, *Art & Auction* and the *Boulé Journal*.

In addition to television and print media, Burns is also active in the theater arts; in 1981, he was commissioned by Harry Belafonte to write *Stackalee*, a full length stage drama. As a playwright, Burns also wrote *African Odyssey*, which premiered at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in 1997, and *Tall Horse*, which played both in South Africa and in New York City at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival in 2005. Burns has served as the Grand Graptor for Sigma Pi Psi and as a member of the Guardsmen.

Khephra Burns was interviewed by the *The HistoryMakers* on September 13, 2005.

Related Entries

University of California-Santa Barbara [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

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

Simi Valley High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

St Albert The Great Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Essence Magazine [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Writer

Public Broadcasting Service (U.S.) [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Producer

Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (Boule) [MEMBEROF]

[from 2008 to 2012]

Grand Graptor

Guardsmen [MEMBEROF]

[from 2008 to 2012]

Member