

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bernie Casey

PERSON

Casey, Bernie

Alternative Names: Bernie Casey; ;

Life Dates: June 8, 1939-September 19, 2017

Place of Birth: Wyco, West Virginia, USA

Residence: Los Angeles, CA

Occupations: Football Player; Film Actor

Biographical Note

Bernie Casey was born Bernard Terry Casey on June 8, 1939, in the small coal mining community of Wyco, West Virginia, to Frank Leslie Casey and Flossie Coleman Casey. While Casey was still a youth, he and his family moved to Columbus where he attended Garfield Elementary School, Champion Junior High, and Columbus East High School. Casey had already shown an aptitude for painting and drawing, and soon developed his athletic abilities as well, particularly for basketball and football.

Casey attended Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in Ohio in 1957, thanks in part to an athletic scholarship, where he remained intent on becoming an artist. Casey excelled in football while attending BGSU, and was considered a key player in the school's 1959 championship season. Casey was named a member of the Little All American Team, and was also competitive in track and field. Casey received his B.S. degree in Art Education from BGSU in 1961, and later received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the same school.

In 1961, after receiving his B.S. degree, Casey was drafted into the NFL in the first round by the San Francisco 49ers, with whom he would spend six seasons, followed by two years with the Los Angeles Rams. In the off-season, Casey returned to Bowling Green State University, in order to complete his M.F.A. degree, which he received in 1966. After his standout 1967 athletic season in which Casey caught 53 passes for a career-high 871 yards and eight touchdowns, Casey was named to the 1968 Pro Bowl team. Shortly thereafter, Casey became disillusioned with the NFL and professional sports in general, and decided to return to his creative pursuits.

In 1969, Casey appeared in his first film, *Guns of the Magnificent Seven*, a sequel to *The Magnificent Seven*; that same year, he wrote *Look at the People: Poems and Paintings*, a book of art and poetry. Casey would publish two similar books later on in his career: *Where is the Revolution? And Other Poems* in 1973, and *Silent Screams* in 1983. In 1971, Casey produced an independent film entitled *Bernie Casey: Black Artist*, which focused on his thoughts and observations as a painter. As an artist, Casey has produced more than 30 solo exhibitions; he received an honorary doctorate degree from The Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Savannah, Georgia, where he served for twenty years as chairman of the board and advocated for arts education.

Casey has made over fifty-seven appearances in film and television, including the movies *Cleopatra Jones*, *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka*, *Revenge of the Nerds*, and *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*; and TV programs such as *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *L.A. Law*. In 1997, Casey produced, wrote, directed and acted in *The Dinner*, an allegorical drama.

Casey passed away on September 19, 2017.

Related Entries

East High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

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

Champion Avenue School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Bowling Green State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

San Francisco 49ers [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1961 to 1966]

Player

Los Angeles Rams [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1967 to 1968]

Player

Various [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1969 to ?]

Actor

Harris and Company [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1979 to 1979]

Lead Actor

Savannah College of Art and Design [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Chairman

**Second World Black and African Arts and Culture
Festival** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Delegate