

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with David A. Smith

PERSON

Smith, David A., 1915-2010

Alternative Names: David A. Smith;

Life Dates: August 29, 1915-January 24, 2010

Place of Birth: Clinton, Louisiana, USA

Residence: Denver, Colorado

Occupations: Real Estate Entrepreneur

Biographical Note

Real estate entrepreneur David A. Smith was born on August 29, 1915 in Clinton, Louisiana. Smith has the distinction of being one of the first African American real estate brokers in Denver, Colorado. His paternal grandfather, Walter Smith, was a contractor and built most of the homes, churches and schools in Clinton, Louisiana. As a child, Smith moved with his mother to New Orleans, Louisiana where he attended a private school, Gilbert Academy, before moving to Denver, Colorado and graduating in 1933 from Manual High

School. Continuing his education, Smith attended Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College in Pine Bluff, Arkansas until 1935 before receiving his B.A. degree in economics from West Virginia State College in 1938. Completing his studies at the University of Denver in 1940, Smith received his M.A. degree in economics.

Smith began his professional career as an office assistant to Governor Neely of West Virginia. In the 1940s, he enlisted into the segregated United States Army. Here, he served as an officer in the 477th Bomber Group in Tuskegee, Alabama. He was one of the officers who fought against the discrimination that existed at Freeman Field and was arrested. After an honorable discharge, Smith returned to Denver and started several small entrepreneurial businesses including a liquor store and a real estate agency. He became one of the first African American real estate appraisers and brokers for the city of Denver. During his time, he became one of the most successful African American real estate brokers in Denver.

Smith retired in the late 1990s, and his daughter has continued to maintain his real estate practice. Smith has received several awards for being an outstanding businessman and is a member of several organizations including the Urban League and the NAACP. Smith passed away on January 24, 2010.

Smith was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 19, 2006.

Related Entries

Manual High School [STUDENTOF]

[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff [STUDENTOF]

[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

Associate

West Virginia State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

University of Denver [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.A.

Gilbert Academy [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Dave Smith Realty [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Real Estate Broker

Federal Housing Administration [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Real Estate Appraiser

Veteran's Administration [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Real Estate Appraiser

Brown Palace Hotel and Spa [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Shoeshine

Union Pacific [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Bus boy

Colorado Real Estate Commission [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Commissioner

Career Service Authority [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Director

NAACP [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

National Urban League [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Tuskegee Airmen [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]