

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with John B. Clemmons, Sr.

PERSON

Clemmons, John B., 1912-
2012

Alternative Names: John B. Clemmons, Sr.;

Life Dates: April 11, 1912-June 13, 2012

Place of Birth: Rome, Georgia, USA

Residence: Savannah, GA

Occupations: Math Professor; Physics Professor

Biographical Note

College professor and scholar J.B. Clemmons was born John Benjamin Clemmons on April 11, 1912 to Lewis and Bessie Clemmons in Rome, Georgia. Clemmons graduated from high school in 1927 after completing only the tenth grade; African Americans were not allowed to go to eleventh or twelfth grade in Rome. In 1930, he entered Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Clemmons then enrolled in graduate studies at Atlanta University, obtaining his M.A. degree in 1937. He then moved to Harlan, Kentucky, where he began teaching for \$100 a week and met and married Mozelle Daily. By 1942, Clemmons was the principal of the school in Harlan. In 1947, Clemmons and his wife moved to Savannah, Georgia. While his wife began her lifelong involvement in the NAACP, Clemmons taught at Savannah State College (now Savannah State University) alongside his colleague, Dr. Henry M. Collier, Jr. Together, they formed the Delta ETA Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. In the summer of 1949, he worked as a visiting professor at the University of Pittsburgh.

Clemmons then decided to continue his education by attending the University of Southern California to earn his Ph.D. He received Ford Foundation and National Science Foundation grants in 1951 and 1952, respectively. After working towards earning his Ph.D. at UCLA, Clemmons decided to return to Georgia, continued his teaching career and became involved in banking. He went on to charter the Alpha Lambda Boulé of the Sigma Pi Phi in Savannah in 1963.

Clemmons served as the Chairman of the Department of Mathematics and Physics at Savannah State University for thirty-seven years. He received many honors over the years for his outstanding work and philanthropic efforts in the community. Clemmons served as Chairman of the Board for Carver State Bank in Savannah.

Clemmons passed away on June 13, 2012 at the age of 100.

Related Entries

Morehouse College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

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

Clark Atlanta University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Master's

University of Southern California [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

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

Fairbanks Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Tobacco Farm [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Worker

Duffy's Tavern [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Rosenwald High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Teachers and Principal

Savannah State University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Professor

Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (Boule) [MEMBEROF]
[from 1998 to 2008]

Carver State Bank [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Chair

Boy Scouts of America [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Alpha Lambda Boule [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Co-founder

Goodwill Industries International, Inc. [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board

Memorial University Medical Center [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board

American Red Cross [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board

Junior Achievement [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Hall of Fame Inductee