

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with E. Lee Lassiter

PERSON

Lassiter, Ernest , 1936-

**Alternative Names:** Lassiter, Ernest , 1936-; Lassiter, E. Lee

**Life Dates:** July 11, 1936-

**Place of Birth:** Carpenter, North Carolina

**Residence:** Gwynn Oak, Maryland

**Occupations:** Newspaper Columnist; Journalism Professor

## Biographical Note

Newspaper columnist and journalism professor E. Lee Lassiter was born on July 11, 1936, in Carpenter, North Carolina. His father, Narvie Lassiter, was a tenant farmer while his mother, Margie Upchurch Lassiter, was a housewife and sold cosmetics. Lassiter's parents made a pact that all of their children would graduate from high school and, unlike most tenant farmers, insisted they attend school every day. Lassiter attended the segregated Apex Elementary School in Apex, North Carolina and Barry O'Kelly High School in Method, North Carolina, graduating in 1954. He worked his way through college at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in, receiving his B.A. degree in secondary education in 1959. He earned his M.A. degree in journalism from Boston University in 1963 and his Ed.D. degree from Morgan State University in 1993.

While a student at Tuskegee, Lassiter joined the Reserve Officers Training Corps. In 1961, he served in the Adjutant General's Corps of the Army as a correspondence officer and technical writer and remained in the Army Reserves for another ten years. Near the close of 1961, he joined the editorial staff at the "Baltimore Afro-American" newspaper before moving, in 1965, to the "Baltimore News-American," where he remained until the newspaper ceased operations in 1986. During his time at the Baltimore News-American," Lassiter wrote editorials and worked in various positions in the editing department. In 1974, he became a regular columnist at the newspaper, with syndicated columns in newspapers around the nation. After the paper closed, Lassiter accepted a position as an associate professor of English at Coppin State University. He retired from teaching in 1999, and began working as a public relations associate for the University. In 2003, he retired from that position, but accepted a contract to work in the same capacity online from his home.

Lassiter is an active member of numerous associations, including the NAACP, the Baltimore Tuskegee Alumni Association and the Black Writers' Guild of Maryland. He has been a member of Mount Ararat Baptist Church in Baltimore for forty-four years. Active in community service for almost forty years, among his numerous awards are the Tuskegee University Presidential Associate Award, African Methodist Episcopal Church Christian Service Award and the Council for Cultural Progress Public Service Award. In 1981, he was honored with a Giant in Journalism trophy. Lassiter lives in Baltimore with his wife, Hannah Louise Lassiter.

E. Lee Lassiter was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 16, 2010.

## Related Entries

**Lassiter, Clarence L.** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Grandfather (P)

**Hackney, Daisy Jane** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Grandmother (P)

**Upchurch, Claude** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Grandfather (M)

**Baker, Bethenia** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Grandmother (M)

**Lassiter, Hannah Louise** [SPOUSEOf]  
Wife

**Lassiter, Narvie Hester** [CHILDOf]  
Father

**Lassiter, Willis Clarence** [SIBLINGOf]  
Brother

**Upchurch, Margie R.** [CHILDOf]  
Mother

**Lassiter, Mary Gladys Ruth** [SIBLINGOf]  
Sister

**Lassiter, Jean Elizabeth** [SIBLINGOf]  
Sister

**Lassiter, Janie Carolyn** [SIBLINGOf]  
Sister

**Lassiter, Lewis Irvin** [SIBLINGOf]  
Brother

**Lassiter, Raymond Howard** [SIBLINGOf]  
Brother

**Lassiter, Ava Bonita** [SIBLINGOf]  
Sister

**Apex Elementary School** [STUDENTOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Berry O'Kelly High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1954]

**diploma**

**Tuskegee University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1959]

**B.A.**

**Boston University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1963]

**M.A.**

**Morgan State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1993]

**Ed.D.**

**Boston University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1960 to 1960]

**Public Relations**

**United States. Army.** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1961 to ?]

**Correspondence Officer and Technical Writer**

**Afro-American Newspapers** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1961 to 1965]

**Reporter**

**Baltimore News-American** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1965 to 1986]

**Columnist**

**Coppin State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1986 to 2003]

**Associate Professor**

**Boyscouts of America** [MEMBEROF]  
**District Commissioner**

**Community College of Baltimore Hospitality Management Steering Committee** [MEMBEROF]  
**Member**

**YMCA Long Range Planning Committee** [MEMBEROF]  
**Member**

**The Continentals** [MEMBEROF]  
**Board of Directors**

**Big Brothers/ Big Sisters** [MEMBEROF]  
**Member**

**Community College of Baltimore Nursing School Steering Committee** [MEMBEROF]  
**Member**

**Baltimore City Schools Media Advisory Committee** [MEMBEROF]  
Member

**Baltimore City Schools Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee**  
[MEMBEROF]  
Member

**Mount Ararat Baptist Church** [MEMBEROF]  
Board of Directors

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People** [MEMBEROF]  
Member

**Black Writers Guild of Maryland** [MEMBEROF]

**Baltimore Tuskegee Alumni Association** [MEMBEROF]

**National Association of English Teachers** [MEMBEROF]  
Member

**American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland** [MEMBEROF]  
Board of Directors

**Jazz Heritage Foundation** [MEMBEROF]  
Board of Directors