

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Charles Collins

PERSON

Collins, Charles, 1947-

**Alternative Names:** Collins, Charles, 1947-;

**Life Dates:** November 22, 1947-

**Place of Birth:** San Francisco, California

**Residence:** California

**Occupations:** Community Leader; Association Branch Chief Executive;

## Biographical Note

Business executive, community developer and Harvard trained lawyer Charles Miller Collins was born on November 22, 1947 to Daniel Collins and DeReath Curtis James in the Fillmore community of San Francisco, California. After graduating from Tamalpais High School in 1965, Collins pursued higher education at Williams College, where he earned his B.A. degree with honors in 1969. Four years later, Collins earned his Master of City Planning degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and subsequently his J.D. degree from Harvard Law School in 1976.

Upon completing his education, Collins began his professional career working with the law firm of Steinhart and Falconer, and then the law firm of Berkeley and Rhodes. An active member of the San Francisco and California communities, Collins led a comprehensive study for the City and County of San Francisco in 1979 and became the deputy secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency for the State of California in 1980. Collins has also served in leadership capacities as president and chairman of WDG Ventures, Inc., a real estate development firm in San Francisco; president and chief executive officer of the Family Service Agency of San Francisco; and president and chief executive officer of the YMCA of San Francisco. In his work with the YMCA, Collins has supported its mission to strengthen the foundations of communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Collins has received much recognition for his work in community development, including the 2003 Bicentennial Award from Williams College. In 2005, Collins was named the senior vice chairman of the National Urban League. For his dedication to the organization, the National Urban League established the Charles Collins Award in his honor. Collins was also the author of "The African

Americans," a collection of photographs recognizing the accomplishments of African Americans in various capacities. He was also the senior editor of "A Day in the Life of Africa."

Collins is married to Paula Robinson Collins. They have two daughters, Sara DeReath Collins and Julia Elizabeth Collins.

Charles Collins was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 10, 2011.

## Related Entries

**Collins, Andrew Sumner** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Grandfather (P)

**Miller Collins, Lucy** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Grandmother (P)

**James, J** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-Great-Great-Great-Great Grandfather

**Robinson, Paula** [SPOUSEOf]  
Wife

**Collins, Daniel A.** [CHILDOf]  
Father

**James, Charles Howell** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-grandfather (M)

**Pettiford, Sara** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-Great-Grandmother

**James Sr. , Edward Lawrence** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Grandfather (M)

**Curtis James, DeReath** [CHILDOf]  
Mother

**Shaw, Stella** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Grandmother (M)

**James, Franklin** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-great-great-grandfather

**James, Sarah** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-Great-Great-Great-Grandmother

**James, Howel** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-Great-Great Grandfather

**Clark, Benjamin** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-great-grandfather (M)

**Bass, Emily** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-great-grandfather (M)

**James, Frances Charles** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Great-great-grandfather (M)

**Courtney, Eliza** [GRANDCHILDOf]

**Great-Great-Grandmother**

**Clark, Roxanne** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
**Great-grandmother (M)**

**Brookram, Alice Lavinia** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
**Great-grandmother (M)**

**James, Martha** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
**Great-Great-Great-Grandmother**

**Shaw, Daniel Webster** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
**Great-grandfather (M)**

**Bookram, Soloman** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
**Great-great-grandfather (P)**

**Old Mill Elementary** [STUDENTOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Elementary**

**Edna Maguire Elementary** [STUDENTOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Elementary**

**Tamalpais High** [STUDENTOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**High School**

**Williams College** [STUDENTOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology** [STUDENTOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.B.A.**

**YMCA San Francisco** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**President, Chief Executive Officer**

**Family Service Agency of San Francisco** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**President, Chief Executive Officer**

**WDG Ventures Inc.** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**President and Chairman**

**San Francisco Art Institute** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Chairman**

**National Urban League** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Former Senior Vice Chairman**

**San Francisco Museum of Modern Art** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Executive Committee and chairs the Marketing and  
Communications Committee**

**Alpha Phi Alpha** [MEMBEROF]

**Sigma Pi Phi** [MEMBEROF]