

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with T.J. Anderson

PERSON

Anderson, T. J.

**Alternative Names:** T.J. Anderson;

**Life Dates:** August 17, 1928-

**Place of Birth:** Coatesville, Pennsylvania, USA

**Residence:** Atlanta, GA

**Occupations:** Music Composer

## Biographical Note

Composer and music professor Thomas Jefferson Anderson was born on August 17, 1928 in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. Anderson attended West Virginia State College and Pennsylvania State University, where he received his B.A. degree in music and his M.Ed. degree in music education in 1950 and 1951, respectively. Anderson studied composition at the Cincinnati College - Conservatory of Music in 1954, before obtaining his Ph.D. degree in music at the University of Iowa in 1958. Anderson also studied

composition at the Aspen School of Music in 1964  
with Darius Milhaud

Anderson was hired as a professor of music at Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma, where he became chair of the music department. He then served as a music professor at Tennessee State University before being named composer-in-residence with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in 1969. During his three year tenure at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Anderson orchestrated the Scott Joplin opera *Treemonisha* and in 1972, the first full staging of Joplin's work took place. His first opera, *Soldier Boy*, based on a libretto by writer Leon Forrest, was commissioned by Indiana University. After a visiting professorship at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Anderson was hired as a professor of music and department chair at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts in 1972.

As a lecturer, consultant, and visiting composer, Anderson has taught at institutions in the United States, Brazil, Germany, France and Switzerland. He has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Virginia Center for the Arts, the Djerassi Foundation, the National Humanities Center and a scholar-in-residence at the Rockefeller Center for the Creative Arts in Bellagio, Italy. Anderson has accumulated numerous honors throughout his illustrious career, including an honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa, a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and grants from the Rockefeller Foundation. He has received honorary doctorates from the College of Holy Cross, West Virginia State College, Bridgewater State College, St. Augustine's College, Northwestern University, Bates College and Tufts University. In March, 1997, he was honored as a founder and first president of the National Black Music Caucus, now NASPAAM with a concert of his music. In 2005, Anderson was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Anderson and his wife, Lois, have three adult children, a son, Thomas J.

Anderson and two daughters, Janet Anderson and Anita Anderson Downing.

T.J. Anderson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 19, 2012.

## Related Entries

**Monroe School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Harriet Beecher Stowe Junior High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**S. Horace Scott Senior High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

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

**BA**

**Pennsylvania State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.Ed**

**University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**N/A**

**University of Iowa** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**PhD**

**High Point Public Schools** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1951 to 1954]

**Music Teacher**

**West Virginia State College (Institute, W. Va.)**

[EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1955 to 1955]

**Professor of Music**

**Langston University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1945 to 1969]

**Professor of Music**

**Tennessee State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1963 to 1969]

**Professor of Music**

**Atlanta Symphony Orchestra** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1969 to 1971]

**Composer-In-Residence**

**Morehouse College** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1971 to 1972]

**Visiting Professor**

**Tufts University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1974 to ?]

**Chairman, Department of Music**

**Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America**

[MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**American Music Center** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**Black Music Caucus** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1972 to 1976]

**National Chairman**

**Harvard Musical Association** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1976 to 1991]

**Resident Member**

**College Music Society** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1976 to 1980]

**Chairperson, Committee on Status of Minorities**

**Black Music Center, Indiana University** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1977 to ?]

**Chairperson, Advisory Committee**

**Massachusetts Council for the Arts and Humanities**

[MEMBEROF]

[from 1978 to 1981]

**Member**