

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with James Johnson, Jr.

PERSON

**Johnson, James H., 1947-**

**Alternative Names:** James Johnson, Jr.;

**Life Dates:** May 27, 1947-

**Place of Birth:** Annapolis, Maryland, USA

**Residence:** Annapolis, MD

**Work:** Washington, D.C.

**Occupations:** Civil Engineer; Education Administrator

## Biographical Note

Civil engineer and education administrator James H. Johnson, Jr. was born on May 27, 1947 to parents, James and Arline in Annapolis, Maryland. He earned his B.S. degree in civil engineering from Howard University. He then attended the University of Illinois, where he received his M.S. degree in sanitary engineering in 1970. Johnson worked as a consultant and as an engineer at Engineering Science before

continuing his education at the University of Delaware. He received his Ph.D. degree in civil and environmental engineering in 1982.

Following the completion of his graduate studies, Johnson was offered a position on the faculty of his alma mater, Howard University. Johnson's research focused on the treatment of hazardous compounds, contaminated soil including explosive waste, and environmental policy. He became chair of the Howard University Department of Civil Engineering in 1982. From 1989 until 2002, Johnson served as associate director of the Great Lakes and Mid-Atlantic Hazardous Substance Research Center. In 1996, he was appointed dean of Howard University's College of Engineering, Architecture, and Computer Sciences and in 2005 he was named the Samuel P. Massie Professor of Civil Engineering. Four years later, Johnson became professor emeritus of civil engineering at Howard University. In 2010, he was appointed chair of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson. Johnson was the first African American to chair this independent committee for the Agency. He has also served as chair of the U.S. EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors. In 2012, Johnson was appointed director of EPA's National Center for Environmental Research (NCER) within the Office of Research and Development. Johnson has co-edited two books, contributed to three more, and he has published over 60 academic papers.

Johnson is a diplomate of the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and in 2005, he received the National Society of Black Engineers Lifetime Achievement Award in Academia. He has also been recognized with the 2008 Water Environment Federation Gordon Maskew Fair Distinguished Educator Award and a Lifetime Achievement Award by National Society of Black Engineers (DC Chapter) in 2009. He is a member of the Water Environment

Federation, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Society for Engineering Education, the Association of Environmental Engineers and Science Professors and the American Academy of Environmental Engineers.

James H. Johnson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 15, 2012.

## Related Entries

**Howard University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**B.S.**

**University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**M.S.**

**University of Delaware** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Ph.D.**

**Engineering Science, Inc. (Parsons)** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1950 to 1980]

**Engineer**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1971 to 2009]

**Professor and Dean**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1965 to ?]

**Professor Emeritus**

**United States Environmental Protection Agency**

[EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1978 to ?]

**Director of EPA's National Center for  
Environmental Research**

**American Society of Civil Engineers** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1969 to ?]

**Association of Environmental Engineers and Science  
Professors** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1990 to ?]

**American Academy of Environmental Engineers**  
[MEMBEROF]  
[from 1990 to ?]

**American Society for Engineering Education**  
[MEMBEROF]  
[from 1995 to ?]

**Water Environment Federation** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 2008 to ?]