

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Fillmore Freeman

PERSON

Freeman, Fillmore , 1936-

**Alternative Names:** Freeman, Fillmore , 1936-

**Life Dates:** April 10, 1936-

**Place of Birth:** Lexington, Mississippi

**Residence:** Irvine, CA

**Occupations:** Organic Chemist; Chemistry Professor

## Biographical Note

Organic chemist and chemistry professor Fillmore Freeman was born on April 10, 1936 in Lexington, Mississippi. Freeman earned his high school diploma from John Marshall High School in Chicago, Illinois in 1953, and then enrolled at Central State College in Wilberforce, Ohio. There, Freeman graduated summa cum laude with honors in 1957 earning his B.S. degree in chemistry. Freeman received his Ph.D. degree in physical organic chemistry from Michigan State University in 1962.

After briefly working with a private firm, Freeman served as a National Institutes of Health Fellow at Yale University in 1964. The following year, he became an assistant professor at California State University at Long Beach. During this time, the school expanded its chemistry and biochemistry programs to accommodate the growing interest in these fields. In 1973, Freeman became a professor of chemistry at the University of California at Irvine, where he continued to work for the duration of his professional career. With his background in physical organic chemistry, Freeman has conducted research on a number of topics, including organic synthesis pathways and reactions, particularly those of cyclic compounds. His research has also relied

heavily on the use of computational chemistry. In 1991, he received a grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to develop compounds from tropical plants in Latin America and Africa to fight various fungal diseases, viruses and parasitic illnesses. Freeman's work has had a strong emphasis in isolating, researching and synthesizing compounds with anti-tumor and anti-viral properties.

Freeman has received recognition for his work in the field of physical organic chemistry. He was named an Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Fellow and a Fulbright-Hayes Senior Research Fellow. He also had the opportunity to serve as a visiting professor at the Max Planck Institute of Biophysical Chemistry and the University of Paris. Author of numerous academic papers, Freeman has become one of the three most frequently cited African American chemists in the nation (the other two being Donald J. Darensbourg at Texas A&M University and Joseph S. Francisco of Purdue University), according to a survey conducted by the "Journal of Blacks in Higher Education".

Fillmore Freeman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 27, 2012.

## Related Entries

**Meeks, Ellen** [CHILD OF]

**Mother**

**Tolbert, Mary Cora** [STEPCHILD OF]

**Stepmother**

**Freen, Millard F.** [CHILD OF]

**Father**

**Freeman, Sally** [GRANDCHILD OF]

**Paternal Grandmother**

**Freeman, Albert** [GRANDCHILD OF]

**Paternal Grandfather**

**Freeman, Charles** [SIBLING OF]

**Brother**

**Freeman, Alphonzo** [SIBLING OF]

**Brother**

**Freeman, Elvira** [SIBLING OF]

**Sister**

**Freeman, Stephanie Marie** [PARENT OF]

**Daughter**

**Freeman, Stephen Mark** [PARENTOF]  
Son

**Freeman, Christopher** [PARENTOF]  
Son

**Freeman, Crystal Denise** [PARENTOF]  
Daughter

**Freeman, Abraham** [SIBLINGOF]  
Brother

**John Marshall Metropolitan High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1953-06-23]

**Diploma**

**Central State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1957-06]

**B.S.**

**Michigan State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1962-06]

**Ph.D.**

**Yale University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to 1964]

**NIH Postdoctoral**

**California Research Corporation** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1962 to 1964]

**Research Scientist**

**California State University, Long Beach** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1965 to 1973]

**Professor**

**Université de Paris VII** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1971 to 1972]

**Visiting Professor**

**University of California, Irvine** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1973 to ?]

**Professor**

**Max-Planck-Institut** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1977 to 1978]

**Visiting Professor**

**Institut de Chimie des Substances Naturelles** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1982 to 1985]

**Visiting Professor**

**National Science Foundation** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1989 to 1990]

**Program Director**

**American Chemical Society** [MEMBEROF]

**Golden Key International Honour Society** [MEMBEROF]

**The National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers** [MEMBEROF]

**American Association for the Advancement of Science** [MEMBEROF]

**International Society of Heterocyclic Chemistry** [MEMBEROF]