

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham

PERSON

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks, 1945-

Alternative Names: Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham;

Life Dates: June 4, 1945-

Place of Birth: Washington, District of Columbia, USA

Residence: Auburndale, Massachusetts

Work: Cambridge, Massachusetts

Occupations: African American History Professor

Biographical Note

Professor Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham was born on June 4, 1945 in Washington, D.C. to Albert Neal Dow Brooks, the secretary-treasurer for the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History and editor of the organization's Negro History Bulletin, and Alma Elaine Campbell, a high school history teacher who later served as the supervisor for history in the Washington, D.C. public school system. Higginbotham received her B.A. degree in history from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1969, her M.A. degree in history from Howard University in 1974, and her Ph.D. degree in history from the University of Rochester in 1984.

After receiving her B.A. degree, Higginbotham taught U.S. history and served as an eighth grade counselor at Francis Parkman Jr. High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for two years. She then moved to Washington, D.C., where she taught U.S. history and social studies at Woodrow Wilson High School from 1971 to 1974. After working as a manuscript research associate at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University from 1974 to 1975, Higginbotham was hired as a professor of history at several institutions, including Dartmouth College, the University of Maryland, and the University of Pennsylvania. Higginbotham joined the faculty at Harvard University in 1993 as a professor of Afro-American studies and African American religious history. In 1998, she was named the Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and African American Studies at Harvard University. Higginbotham was appointed chair of Harvard's African American Studies Department in 2006 and served in that position until 2013. In 2008, she served as acting director of Harvard's W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research. Higginbotham was appointed the inaugural John Hope Franklin Professor of American Legal History at Duke University

Law School in 2010. She then was named the national president of ASALH in 2016 and chair of the Department of History at Harvard University in 2018, holding both positions until 2021.

Higginbotham is the author of *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church: 1880-1920* (1993). She also updated and revised the late John Hope Franklin's African American history survey *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (2010). Higginbotham served as editor-in-chief of *The Harvard Guide to African-American History* (2001) and was co-editor, with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., of the expanded, twelve-volume *The African American National Biography* (2012).

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) honored Higginbotham with the Carter G. Woodson Scholars Medallion in 2008 and the Living Legacy Award in 2012. Higginbotham received an honorary doctorate from Howard University in 2011, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2014, and Duke University in 2021. In 2014, she received the National Humanities Medal.

Higginbotham lives in Auburndale, Massachusetts.

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 25, 2013 and August 21, 2022.

Related Entries

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Howard University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.A.

University of Rochester [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

Slowe Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

MacFarland Middle School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Theodore Roosevelt Senior High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

[EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1958 to 1973]

Francis Parkman Jr. High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1978 to ?]

American History teacher/Eighth-Grade Counselor

Woodrow Wilson High School [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1972 to 1974]

American History and Social Studies Teacher

Moorland-Spingarn Research Center [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1974 to 1975]

Manuscript Research Associate

Simmons College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1976 to ?]

Part-Time Faculty

Dartmouth College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1980 to 1982]

Instructor

University of Maryland, College Park [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1982 to 1986]

Assistant Professor, Afro-American Studies

University of Pennsylvania [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1986 to 1992]

Assistant Professor, American History

Princeton University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1991 to 1992]

Visiting Professor of Religion

Harvard University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1983 to ?]

Professor of Afro-American Studies and African American Religious History

Harvard University Guide to African-American History [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1993 to 2001]

Principal Investigator and General Manager

Harvard University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1967 to ?]

Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and of African American Studies

Harvard University Guide to African-American History [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2001 to 2001]

Editor-in-Chief

Duke University Law School [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2010 to 2011]

Inaugural John Hope Franklin Professor of American Legal History

Harvard University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1955 to 1958]

Part-Time Faculty, Divinity School

Harvard University Department of African and African American Studies [MEMBEROf]
[from 2006 to ?]

Chair