Biographical Description for
The HistoryMakers® Video
Oral History with Marcus McCraven

McCraven, Marcus, 1923-

Alternative Names: McCraven, Marcus, 1923-

Life Dates: December 27, 1923-

Place of Birth: Des Moines, Iowa

Residence: Hamden, CT

Occupations: Electrical Engineer

Biographical Note

Electrical engineer Marcus R. McCraven was born on December 27, 1924 in Des Moines, Iowa to parents Marcus and Buena McCraven. After graduating from high school, McCraven enrolled at Howard University but was drafted into the U.S. Army during his first year of college. He was listed as an expert rifleman but went on to serve as a supply clerk with an engineering regiment in Papua, New Guinea and in the Philippines. Returning to the United States, McCraven continued his studies at Howard University and graduated with his B.S. degree in electrical engineering.

Upon graduation, McCraven was hired at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C. After six months, he was promoted to electrical engineer and became the project leader of the Nuclear Systems Branch. McCraven soon moved to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California where he worked on the hydrogen bomb. His area of expertise on the project was diagnostics and he was instrumental in the early development of nuclear weapons, including nuclear tests on Bikini Island and in Nevada. McCraven then joined the research staff at the California Lawrence Radiation Laboratory; and, in the 1960s, he left California and moved to Connecticut.
where he began to work for Phelps Dodge. In 1970, he joined United Illuminating Co. as the director of environmental engineering and was later promoted to vice president.

McCraven has also served as trustee at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut. In 2011, McCraven received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree from Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, Connecticut.

McCraven lives in Hamden, Connecticut with his wife, Marguerite McCraven, a former social worker in the Hamden Public Schools. They have three children: Paul McCraven, the vice president of community development at New Alliance Bank; Stephen McCraven, a musician living in Paris, Carol McCraven.

Marcus McCraven was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 8, 2013.

Related Entries

McCraven, Marguerite [spouseOf] Wife
Rowan Rollins, Susan [greatGrandchildOf] Great Grandfather (M)
Rollins, Buena [childOf] Mother
McCraven, Paul [parentOf] Son
McCraven, Marcus [childOf] Father
Rowan Rollins, Sandy [grandchildOf] Maternal Grandfather
Reeves McCraven, Elisabeth [grandchildOf] Paternal Grandmother
Jackson Rollins, Alline [grandchildOf] Maternal Grandmother
Mac Craven, Henry [greatGrandchildOf] Great Grandfather (P)
McCraven, Stephen [parentOf] Son
McCraven, Harry [GRANDCHILD OF] Paternal Grandfather

Ivy, Carol [PARENT OF] Daughter

Howard University [STUDENT OF] [from ? to 1949-06]
  B.S.

University of Maryland [STUDENT OF]

University of California [STUDENT OF]

Naval Research Laboratory [EMPLOYEE OF] [from 1949 to 1954]
  Project Leader

University of California, Livermore [EMPLOYEE OF] [from 1954 to 1964]
  Head of Systems Development

Phelps Dodge Electronics [EMPLOYEE OF] [from 1964 to 1969]
  Chief Engineer

United Illuminating Co. [EMPLOYEE OF] [from 1969 to 1989]
  Vice President, Environmental Engineering

U.S. EPA [MEMBER OF] Advisory Board/Executive Committee Member

NAACP [MEMBER OF] Associate

Yale University [MEMBER OF] Fellow

Yale University Peabody Museum Association [MEMBER OF] Board President

First Constitution Bank [MEMBER OF] Board of Directors

Quinnipiac University [MEMBER OF] Board of Trustees
Edison Electric Institute [MEMBEROf]
   Chairman, Advisory Committee

Connective Agricultural Station [MEMBEROf]
   Board of Control

Tri-State International Red Cross [MEMBEROf]
   Board Chairman

Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity [MEMBEROf]

Marcus and Marguerite McCraven Endowed Scholarship Fund [MEMBEROf]

United States Military Academy [MEMBEROf]
   Selection Panel