

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with James Donaldson

PERSON

Donaldson, James Ashley,  
1941-2019

**Alternative Names:** James Donaldson;

**Life Dates:** April 17, 1941-October 18, 2019

**Place of Birth:** Madison County, Florida, USA

**Residence:** Washington, D.C.

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

**Occupations:** Mathematician

## Biographical Note

Mathematician James A. Donaldson was born in 1941 on a farm in Madison County, Florida as one of eleven children to parents Audrey Brown and Oliver Donaldson. After graduating from high school, Donaldson enrolled at Lincoln University near Oxford, Pennsylvania in 1957 and graduated from there in

1961 with his A.B. degree in mathematics. Donaldson continued his studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where he received his M.S. degree in mathematics in 1963, and his Ph.D. degree in mathematics in 1965.

Upon graduation, Donaldson served as professor of mathematics at Southern University, Howard University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of New Mexico. In addition, Donaldson was appointed as a visiting professor at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Science at the University of Victoria in Canada, the University of Ferrara in Italy, and Duke University in North Carolina. In 1972, Donaldson was named chairman of Howard University Department of Mathematics. During his tenure there, Donaldson oversaw the hiring of new tenured-faculty and the development and inauguration of the first Ph.D. degree-granting mathematics program at a Historically Black College and University.

Donaldson has served on committees of several professional mathematics and science organizations. He is a member of the Council of the American Mathematical Society, served as the second vice president of the Mathematical Association of America, and was the editor of the newsletter of the National Association of Mathematicians. Donaldson's research interests include the history of mathematics and mathematics accessibility issues and he has published more than fifty research papers, articles and presentations in these areas as well.

Donaldson served as a consultant to the National Science Foundation, the National Research Council, the Sloan Foundation, the Educational Testing Service, several state boards of Education, many mathematics departments, and the District of Columbia Public School System. He received the Lincoln University Alumni Achievement Award in 1986, and was the National Institute of Science's memorial lecturer in 1989. Donaldson passed away on October 18, 2019.

James A. Donaldson was interviewed by March 28, 2013.

## Related Entries

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

**Madison County Training School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Lincoln University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**A.B.**

**University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.S.**

**University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Ph.D.**

**Lincoln University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 19981015 to 19990815]

**Interim President**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 19991101 to 20120630]

**Dean**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 196509 to 196006]

**Assistant Professor**

**University of Illinois, Chicago** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 196609 to 197006]

**Assistant Professor**

**University of New Mexico** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 196909 to 197006]

**Research Associate**

**University of New Mexico** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 197009 to 197106]

**Associate Professor**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 197109 to ?]

**Professor**

**Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics**  
[MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**American Association for the Advancement of  
Science (AAAS)** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**Mathematical Association of America (MAA)**  
[MEMBEROF]  
[from 2015 to ?]

**Vice President**

**American Mathematical Society** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Member of Council**

**National Association of Mathematicians (NAM)**  
[MEMBEROF]  
[from 2018 to ?]

**Newsletter Editor**

