

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lawrence J. Pijaux, Jr.

PERSON

Pijaux, Lawrence J., 1944-

**Alternative Names:** Lawrence J. Pijaux, Jr.;

**Life Dates:** April 11, 1944-

**Place of Birth:** New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

**Residence:** Montgomery, AL

**Work:** AL

**Occupations:** Nonprofit Chief Executive

## Biographical Note

Educator and nonprofit executive Lawrence J. Pijaux, Jr. was born on April 11, 1944 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He graduated from McDonogh 35 High School in 1962. Pijaux attended Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and received his B.S. degree. He later earned his M.A.T. degree from Tulane University in New Orleans; and his Ed.D. degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. Pijaux also completed a post-graduate program at the Getty Leadership Institute for Museum Management at the University of California, Berkeley.

Pijaux worked for nearly twenty years in the New Orleans Public School System. While in this system, he served as Principal of L.B. Landry High School. During his tenure, he helped reduce the dropout rate from nearly thirty percent to only fifteen percent. He later worked at the Indianapolis Museum of Art before being recruited to lead the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. Pijaux retired as President and CEO of the Institute in 2014 only one month shy of a twenty-year tenure. He led the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute through its accreditation from the American Association of Museums in 2005; becoming an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in 2007; and receiving two national awards—both presented by First Lady Laura Bush at the White House in Washington, D.C.—the “Coming Up Taller Award for Community Service” in 2007 and the “Inaugural National Medal for Museum Service” in 2008.

In addition to his professional career, Pijaux served as a board member in a number of organizations. From 2006 until 2008, he served as president of the Association of African American Museums, in addition to being named to the National Museum and Library Services Board in 2010 by President Barack Obama. Pijaux has also served on

the board of the Alabama School of Mathematics and Science, and the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel.

Pijaux has been recognized and awarded for his contributions to the education community during his career. In 1989, he was named as one of ten “American Heroes in Education” by Reader’s Digest and was named Alabama Tourism Executive of the Year in 2006 as well. Pijaux was also the recipient of the Smithsonian Institute’s Award for Museum Leadership and the Association of African American Museum’s Service and Achievement Award. In 2015, Pijaux was inducted into the Alabama Tourism Hall of Fame.

Lawrence J. Pijaux, Jr., Ed.D. was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on May 3, 2017.

## Related Entries

**George Washington Carver Junior High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**McDonogh No. 35 Senior High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

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

**M.A.**

**University of Southern Mississippi** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**D.Ed.**

**L.B. Landry High School** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1982 to 1989]

**Principal**

**East Orange High School** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1990 to 1991]

**Principal**

**Indianapolis Museum of Art** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1992 to 1995]

**Project Manager**

**Birmingham Civil Rights Insititute** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1995 to 2014]

**President and CEO**

**Institute of Museum and Library Services** [MEMBEROF]

[from 2010 to 2017]

**Board Member**

**American Alliance of Museums** [MEMBEROf]

[from 2014 to ?]

**Board Member**