

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert C. Davidson, Jr.

PERSON

Davidson, Robert C., 1945-

**Alternative Names:** Robert C. Davidson, Jr.;

**Life Dates:** October 3, 1945-

**Place of Birth:** Memphis, Tennessee, USA

**Residence:** Pasadena, CA

**Work:** Pasadena, CA

**Occupations:** Entrepreneur

## Biographical Note

Entrepreneur Robert C. Davidson, Jr. was born in Memphis, Tennessee on October 3, 1945. He attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, where he graduated with his B.A. degree in 1967, and received his M.B.A. degree from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business in 1967.

Davidson worked at the management consulting firm Cresap, McCormick and Paget and later founded the Urban National Corporation. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, the private venture capital firm focused on investing in minority-controlled businesses. Then, Davidson joined the leadership of Clarence Avant's Sussex Records recording label. After a few years, he founded his own company, Surface Protection Industries, where Davidson served as chairman and CEO. In 1997, he became a trustee at his alma mater, Morehouse College, and later was elected chairman. Davidson also joined the board of trustees of the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena in 2004. He chaired the board's governance committee and led the presidential search committee. In 2010, Davidson was elected chairman of the board of trustees of the Art Center College of Design.

Davidson has also served as a director of the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. He has served on the board of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Charles Drew University School of Medicine. He has also been a member of the boards of the African American Museum of Art, the Black-Jewish Economic Development Committee of Los Angeles, Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

In 1990, Davidson received the Raoul Wallenberg Save the Children award for his humanitarian ideals. He was honored by Morehouse College with the Bennie Leadership award in 2007 and in 1997 the dedication of the President's newly constructed home and executive center was named the "Davidson House Center for Excellence" in his honor. In 2013, Davidson and his wife were named Arts and Culture Ambassadors by the Pasadena Community Foundation for their commitment to the arts in the local community.

Davidson and his wife, Faye Davidson, have three sons, Robert Davidson, III, John Davidson, and Julian Davidson.

Robert C. Davidson, Jr. was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 24, 2017.

## Related Entries

**Saint Augustine Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Father Bertrand High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Morehouse College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**University of Chicago** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Urban National Corporation** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1971 to 1974]

**SVP**

**Avant Garde Enterprises** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1974 to 1976]

**EVP**

**Surface Protective Industries** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1977 to 2007]

**CEO**

**Morehouse College** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1997 to 2017]

**Board of Trustee**

**Jacobs Engineering** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 2001 to ?]

**Board of Directors**

**Art Center College of Design** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 2004 to ?]

**Board of Trustee**

**Cedar Sinai Hospital** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 2005 to ?]

**Board of Directors**