

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. John E. Franklin, Sr.

PERSON

Franklin, John E., 1924-

Alternative Names: Dr. John E. Franklin, Sr.;

Life Dates: June 6, 1924-

Place of Birth: Barbourville, Kentucky, USA

Residence: Charlotte, NC

Occupations: Medical Doctor

Biographical Note

Medical doctor Dr. John E. Franklin, Sr. was born on June 6, 1924 in Barbourville, Kentucky to Sally Lewis Franklin and Stanley Franklin. Franklin and his family migrated to Detroit, Michigan in the early 1930s. In 1942, he graduated summa cum laude from Southeastern High School in Detroit, Michigan becoming the second in his family to earn a high school diploma. He enrolled in night classes at the Detroit Institute of Technology in Detroit, Michigan before enlisting in the U.S. Army. While enlisted, he briefly enrolled at Prairie View University in Prairie View, Texas and later received his B.S. degree in chemical engineering from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1949, where he was the recipient of The Bomber Scholarship for WWII veterans. He also received his M.D. degree from the University of Michigan in 1953.

Franklin worked for the Ford Motor Company and attended night school before he enlisted in 1942 into the U.S. Army where he served in World War II. Upon completing basic training at Fort Wayne in Michigan, he was transferred to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Baltimore, Maryland. Subsequently, he entered the Army Specialized Training Program at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, North Carolina. After two months, he was transferred to Prairie View, Texas and later to the 92nd Infantry Division in Fort Watauga, Arizona as a French horn player and clerk. He served overseas in Italy and later received an honorable discharge. He returned to the U.S. and finished college on the G.I. Bill. After graduation, he completed his surgical residency at Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. Unable to obtain a surgical position due to racial discrimination, Franklin returned to Michigan and opened a private practice in Inkster, Michigan in 1958. Over the next three decades, Franklin cared for Inkster's African American population. He retired in 1989.

Franklin was also a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Franklin and his wife, Arlena Scott Franklin, had five children: Dr. Michael Franklin, Dr. John E. Franklin, Jr., Dr. Paula Franklin, Attorney Renee Franklin Hill, and Dennis Wallace Franklin (deceased at age 9).

Dr. John E. Franklin, Sr. was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 21, 2018.

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