

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bishop Frederick C. James

PERSON

James, Frederick Calhoun, 1922-

Alternative Names: Bishop Frederick C. James;

Life Dates: April 7, 1922-

Place of Birth: Prosperity, South Carolina, USA

Residence: Columbia, S.C.

Work: Columbia, S.C.

Occupations: Bishop

Biographical Note

Bishop Frederick C. James was born on April 7, 1922, in Prosperity, South Carolina, to Rosa Lee Gray and Edward James. James received his A.A. degree in 1941 from Bettis Junior College, in Trenton, South Carolina, his B.A. degree in history and English in 1943 from Allen University, in Columbia, South Carolina, and his M.Div. degree in 1947 from the Howard University School of Divinity, in Washington, D.C. He also attended Dickerson Theological Seminary, in Columbia, South Carolina, and Union Theological Seminary, in New York, New York.

James became pastor of Friendship AME Church in 1945 and of Bishop Memorial AME Church in 1946, both in Columbia, South Carolina, and of Wayman AME Church, in Winnsboro, South Carolina, in 1947. In 1949, James became dean of Dickerson Theological Seminary, and, in 1950, pastor of Chappelle Memorial AME Church in Columbia. In 1953, James moved to Sumter, South Carolina, to assume the pastorate of Mt. Pisgah AME Church. In 1960, James was elected director of social action of the AME Church. In 1962, James helped organize and chaired the Sumter Citizens Committee. In 1963, he became president of the Effective Sumter Movement. In 1972, James was elected the 93rd Bishop of the AME Church. He served the 18th and 15th Episcopal Districts from 1972 to 1976, the 12th from 1976 to 1984, the 7th from 1984 to 1992, and the 2nd from 1993 to 1996. James led Shorter College, in Little Rock, Arkansas, to full accreditation in 1981 and Allen University to full accreditation in 1992. That same year, he served as Ecumenical Bishop and Chaplaincy Endorsement Officer of the AME Church. James retired in 1996.

James has served as chair of Allen University and of the Howard Junior High School

Center in Prosperity, South Carolina, and as a member of the Columbia Housing Authority. He was a member of the delegation to attend the inauguration of South African President Nelson Mandela in 1994. James is a former member of the White House Advisory Board on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and of the U.S. State Department's Advisory Board on Religious Freedom and served as National Vice President of the Interfaith Alliance. James is a life member of the NAACP and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and is a 33 degree Mason. James also served on the board of directors at the National Bank of South Carolina and as a member of the Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce.

James holds an honorary doctorate of humanities from Monrovia College, in Liberia. James received the Order of the Palmetto in 2003 and the Leon A. Love Lifetime Achievement Award from the South Carolina African American Heritage Foundation and Columbia SC 63: Our Story Matters in 2020. James has been inducted into the South Carolina Black Hall of Fame and the Columbia Housing Authority Wall of Fame

James lives in Columbia, South Carolina, where he resided with his late wife, Theresa Gregg.

Bishop Frederick C. James was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 11, 2021.

Related Entries

Howard Junior High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Drayton Street High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Bettis Junior College [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

AA

Allen University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

BA

Dickerson-Green Theological Seminary [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Howard University School of Divinity [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

MDiv

Union Theological Seminary [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Friendship AME Church [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1945 to 1945]

Pastor

Bishop Memorial AME Church [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1946 to 1946]

Pastor

Wayman AME Church [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1947 to 1947]

Pastor

Dickerson Theological Seminary [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1949 to 1953]

Dean

Chappelle Memorial AME Church [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1950 to 1953]

Pastor

Mt. Pisgah AME Church [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1953 to 1972]

Pastor

AME Church [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1960 to ?]

Director of Social Action

AME Church [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1972 to 1996]

Bishop

AME Church [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1992 to 1993]

Ecumenical Bishop and Chaplaincy Endorsement Officer

Sumter Citizens Committee [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Chair

Effective Sumter Movement [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

President

South Carolina Christian Action Council [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Vice President

Allen University [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Howard Junior High School Center [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Chair

Columbia Housing Authority [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Vice Chair

White House Advisory Board on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

[MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Member

U.S. State Department Advisory Board on Religious Freedom [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Member

Interfaith Alliance [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

National Vice President

National Bank of South Carolina [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Member

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