

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Commander Ernest T. Maxey

PERSON

Maxey, Ernest T., 1922-

Alternative Names: Commander Ernest T. Maxey;

Life Dates: October 1, 1922-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Commander

Biographical Note

Commander Ernest T. Maxey was born on October 1, 1922, in Chicago, Illinois, to Ernestine and Homer Maxey. He received his degree in business administration from Roosevelt University in Chicago.

In 1942, Maxey enlisted in the United States Coast Guard, completing his basic training at the Coast Guard Training Center in Manhattan Beach, New York. He was then stationed at Fort Trumbull, in New London, Connecticut, where he worked in the galley. After passing examinations, he was promoted to Seaman First Class and was transferred to the Signalman School in Manhattan Beach, where he trained to become a signalman. Maxey was promoted to Signalman Third Class and stationed at a lighthouse in Long Island Sound, New York. He was then promoted to Signalman Second Class and transferred to the USS General W.H. Gordon at Ellis Island, New York, to be deployed overseas. His tour on the USS General W.H. Gordon ended in 1945, with limited exposure to combat. After his return to the United States, Maxey was honorably discharged from the Coast Guard, and returned to Chicago, Illinois.

In the 1950s, Maxey took various jobs, returned to school, and became state director of Chicago's South End Junior Chamber of Commerce. He then returned to the Coast Guard, serving in the Coast Guard Reserve, stationed on the USCGC Mackinaw. He also became a revenue auditor, instructor, and supervisor for the State of Illinois at this time. In the Coast Guard, Maxey rose from Chief Warrant Officer to Lieutenant Commander in 1980. He was promoted to Commander, and shortly thereafter retired from the Coast Guard, in 1983, as Executive Officer of the Chicago Unit, the highest-ranking black officer in the Coast Guard Ninth District. In civilian life, Maxey joined the Chicago Park District, where he served first as a patrolman and then as the District's first black detective. Maxey is a member of the Retired Legion and the American

Legion of Retired Officers.

Maxey lives in Chicago, Illinois, and has one living son and three daughters.

Commander Ernest T. Maxey was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 4, 2022.

Related Entries

Kennedy–King College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Roosevelt University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Edward Tilden Career Community Academy High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

United States Coast Guard [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1942 to 1983]

Commander

Unknown [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Hotel Clerk

Unknown [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Hotel Manager

State of Illinois [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Revenue Auditor, Instructor, and Supervisor

Chicago Park District [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Detective, Patrolman

[EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

South End Junior Chamber of Commerce [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

State Director

American Legion of Retired Officers [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Retired Legion [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

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