

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Andrew Billingsley

PERSON

Billingsley, Andrew

Alternative Names: Andrew Billingsley;

Life Dates: March 20, 1926-

Place of Birth: Marion, Alabama, USA

Residence: Washington, D.C.

Occupations: Sociology Professor

Biographical Note

Professor Andrew Billingsley was born on March 20, 1926 in Marion, Alabama to Lucy and Silas Billingsley. After serving in the Army, Billingsley attended Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia from 1947 to 1949 before transferring to Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa, where he received his B.A. degree in political science in 1951. Billingsley received his M.S.W. degree from Boston University in 1956 and his M.A. degree in sociology from the University of Michigan in 1960. He graduated from Brandeis University in 1964 with his Ph.D. degree in social policy and research. Billingsley was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Ghana from 1997 to 1998.

After working for the American Friends Service Committee in Chicago, the Wisconsin Department of Public Welfare, and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Billingsley joined the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley in 1964, where he was named assistant chancellor for academic affairs in 1969. In 1970, Billingsley was hired as the provost of Howard University. In 1975, he was inaugurated as the eighth president of Morgan State College (later Morgan State University) in Baltimore, Maryland and helped the school achieve university status during his ten-year tenure. Billingsley then was hired by the University of Maryland, College Park in 1985 as a senior-level sociologist, eventually becoming chair of family studies. In 1996, Billingsley joined the Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina as a visiting scholar, subsequently becoming a distinguished and emeritus professor. Billingsley retired in 2010.

Billingsley is the author of numerous books including *Black Families in White America* (1968), *Children of the Storm: Black Children and American Child Welfare* (1972), *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African-American Families* (1993), and *Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform* (1999).

Billingsley has served on several boards including as chair of the research advisory committee of the National Urban League, chair of the advisory committee of the Male Youth Project at the Shiloh Family Life Center in Washington, D.C., co-chair of the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS: Children's Project, and a board member of the Brookland Foundation, the Florence Heller School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare at Brandeis University, the Africa-America Institute, and the Foundation for Child Development.

Billingsley is the recipient of numerous honors and awards including honorary degrees from Mercy College, Grinnell College, and the University of South Carolina; the Citizenship Award from the South Carolina State Legislature; the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; and the Distinguished Scholar Award from the Association of Black Sociologists. The Billingsley Fellowship was established in his honor at Morgan State University in 1984 and the Andrew Billingsley Forum and Endowed Fellowship was established in his honor at the University of Maryland in 1998.

Billingsley lives in Washington, D.C. He was married to Amy Tate Billingsley for nearly 40 years, with whom he had two daughters, Angela Billingsley and Bonita Billingsley Harris, and three granddaughters.

Andrew Billingsley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on May 12, 2022.

Related Entries

Acmar Junior High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Lincoln School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

A.H. Parker High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

G.E.D.

Hampton University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Grinnell College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

A.B.

University of Michigan [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.A.

Boston University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.S.W.

Brandeis University [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

U.S. Army [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1944 to 1946]

Personnel Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps

American Friends Service Committee [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1951 to 1954]

Director of Youth Service Projects

University of California, Berkeley [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1964 to 1970]

Various

Various [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1968 to ?]

Author

Howard University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1970 to 1975]

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Morgan State University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1975 to 1984]

President

Fordham University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1986 to 1986]

Visiting Scholar

University of Maryland, College Park [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1986 to 1996]

Senior-Level Sociologist

University of South Carolina [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1996 to 2010]

Various

University of Ghana [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1997 to 1998]

Fulbright Scholar

Wisconsin Department of Public Health, Mendota State Hospital [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1956 to 1958]

Psychiatric Social Worker

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1960 to 1963]

Social Worker and Research Assistant

Brookland Foundation [MEMBEROf]
[from 1998 to 2003]

Member of the Board

American Friends Service Committee [MEMBEROf]
[from 1948 to 1958]

Volunteer

Strong Communities, National Advisory Board Clemson University [MEMBEROf]
[from 2000 to 2008]

Member

National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS: Children's Project [MEMBEROf]
[from 1994 to 1996]

Co-Chair

External Review Committee, Purdue University Department of Child and Family Studies [MEMBEROf]
[from 1994 to 1994]

Member

Male Youth Project, Shiloh Family Life Center [MEMBEROf]
[from 1985 to 1992]

Advisory Committee Chair

Department of Sociology University of Massachusetts [MEMBEROf]
[from 1986 to 1986]

Member, External Review Committee

National Urban Leage [MEMBEROf]
[from 1980 to 1986]

Various

Brandeis University Florence Heller School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare [MEMBEROf]
[from 1983 to 1987]

Member, Board of Overseers

African-American Institute [MEMBEROf]
[from 1975 to 1988]

Various

Foundation for Child Development [MEMBEROf]
[from 1978 to 1985]

Member, Board of Directors

The Association of Black Sociologists [MEMBEROF]
[from 1985 to present]

Member

National Council on Family Relations [MEMBEROF]
[from 1985 to 1998]

Member

Groves Conference on Marriage and Family [MEMBEROF]
[from 1986 to 1998]

Member

National Association of Social Workers [MEMBEROF]
[from 1956 to 1990]

Member

American Sociological Association [MEMBEROF]
[from 1970 to 1975]

Member

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