

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with William Raspberry

PERSON

Raspberry, William

Alternative Names: William Raspberry;

Life Dates: October 12, 1935-July 17, 2012

Place of Birth: Okolona, Mississippi, USA

Residence: Washington, DC

Occupations: Newspaper Columnist

Biographical Note

Newspaper columnist William Raspberry is a highly regarded journalist whose twice-weekly columns for The Washington Post are syndicated around the country. Born on October 12, 1935, in Okolona, Mississippi, Raspberry has won the respect and admiration of his media peers for his opinions and reporting.

Raspberry earned a B.S. degree from Indiana Central College in 1958, and from 1960 to 1962 worked in Washington, D.C., as a public information officer with the U.S. Army. After finishing his military service, Raspberry took a job with The Washington Post as a teletypist. Within a few months, he had moved up to writing obituary notices. Raspberry later joined the paper's city desk, first as a reporter and later as an assistant editor.

In 1966, Raspberry took over The Washington Post's "Potomac Watch" column, which concerned local issues. During his tenure, Raspberry molded the column to fit his own interests, which included such topics as drug abuse, criminal justice and minority issues. Independent in tone, neither liberal nor conservative in philosophy, Raspberry consistently wrote on the importance of human responsibility and self-esteem.

Raspberry's columns have earned him numerous awards and much praise, particularly from his colleagues and peers. The Capitol Press Club named him Journalist of the Year for 1965 for his reporting on the Watts Riot in Los Angeles. A longtime member of the Pulitzer Prize Board, Raspberry was nominated for journalism's highest honor in 1982. He finally won the award in 1994 for Distinguished Commentary.

In 1991, Raspberry published *Looking Backward at Us*, a book of columns that touch on the themes of education, poverty, drugs, racism and parenting. Raspberry has also

taught journalism at Howard University, and is a frequent panelist on television talk shows. He resides in Washington, D.C.

William Raspberry passed away on July 17, 2012.

Related Entries

Meridian Street School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Meridian Street School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Okolona Technical College High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

diploma

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

B.A. in English

Indianapolis Recorder [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1955 to 1959]

Sports writer; columnist

United States Army [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1960 to 1962]

Washington Post [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1962 to ?]

Teletypist; Asst. City Editor; Copy Editor; Assignments Editor; Columnist