

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Frank Toland, Sr.

PERSON

Toland, Frank, 1920-2010

Alternative Names: Frank Toland, Sr.;

Life Dates: June 1, 1920-September 12, 2010

Place of Birth: Helena, South Carolina, USA

Work: Tuskegee, Alabama

Occupations: History Professor;

Biographical Note

Educator and civil rights activist Frank Jefferson Toland, Sr. was born on June 1, 1920, in Helena, South Carolina, to Fred Toland and Lily Mae Sligh. The period following the Great Depression put a large strain on Toland's parents, and they eventually went their separate ways. After moving to Newberry, South Carolina, after the third grade, Toland attended Drayton Street High School and graduated as class valedictorian in 1939. After finishing a forty-two week military service beginning in 1942, Toland earned his B.A. degree in English, history, and political science from South Carolina State University.

Soon after, Toland obtained a part-time English teaching position at Wilkinson High School in South Carolina. Toland was then accepted into the University of Pennsylvania's masters program as a history major. During Toland's time at the University of Pennsylvania, he was the only African American student in the entire program. While attending the University of Pennsylvania, Toland worked for six months at William Penn Business Institute teaching English and business math. After receiving his M.A. degree in history in 1948, Toland attended the University of Minnesota and received his Ph.D.

In 1949, Toland left William Penn Business Institute and began working in the history department at the Tuskegee Institute (later Tuskegee University). It was at the Tuskegee Institute that he met his future wife, Maree N. Morse, who was a Tuskegee Institute graduate, and got acquainted with the late Booker T. Washington. The couple married on August 16, 1950, and later had three children. In 1968, Toland became the chair of the Department of History, a position he held until 1984. Also in 1968, Toland was elected unanimously as a member of the City Council of Tuskegee. Toland went on to become the head of the membership committee, the Chairman of the Political Education Committee, and one of the vice presidents of the Tuskegee Civic Association. Driven

by a passion to change the racial inequality that existed in Alabama, Toland became involved in the NAACP and the Macon County Democratic Club and used his membership on the various committees as a platform to voice his opinions on race relations, especially in regards to the Voters Rights Act. Through his involvement with civil rights issues, Toland met numerous leading activists including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Reverend Ralph Abernathy.

Frank Toland passed away on September 12, 2010.

Related Entries

Draden Street High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

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

master's

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

doctorate

South Carolina State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

bachelor's

Tuskegee City Council [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Councilman

William Penn Business Institute [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Professor

Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Teacher

Tuskegee Institute [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1949 to ?]

Professor

NAACP [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Macon County Democratic Club [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Tuskegee Civic Association [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

National Urban League [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member