

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Chalmers Archer, Jr.

PERSON

Archer, Chalmers, 1928-

**Alternative Names:** Chalmers Archer, Jr.;

**Life Dates:** April 21, 1928-February 24, 2014

**Place of Birth:** Tchula, Mississippi, USA

**Residence:** Manassas, VA

**Occupations:** Soldier

## Biographical Note

Combat medical technician, author and education administrator Chalmers Archer, Jr. was born on April 21, 1928 in Tchula, Mississippi to Eva R. Archer, a teacher and Chalmers Archer, Sr., a farmer. As a child, his father and uncles rented a hilltop of more than four hundred acres known as the "Place", where they farmed, cultivated orchards, raised livestock and built smokehouses. The land was sold when Archer was twelve years old and his family moved to Lexington, Mississippi. After graduating from Ambrose High School, he attended Tuskegee University for one year before volunteering for the United States Army Air Corps. Archer was in the United States Army Air Corps for one year and then transferred to the Army. He served on a medical crew as a master sergeant technician during the Korean War, where his unit's job was to retrieve wounded soldiers. In 1952, Archer began training at Fort Bragg's Psychological Warfare Center as part of the newly formed United States Army's Special Forces. His unit was one of the first to enter Vietnam where he trained original Special Forces teams of the South Vietnamese army. On October 21, 1957, Archer's unit was ambushed and he witnessed the first American combat deaths in Vietnam, as well saving the lives of American and Vietnamese soldiers. He did not see action in Vietnam again, however, he did see action in Cambodia and Laos. Archer went on to serve in the Philippines, Hawaii, Korea, Taiwan, and Panama, as well as in Southeast Asia. He ended his army service in 1967 and went back to school, receiving his B.S. degree from the Tuskegee Institute in 1972. Archer earned his M.Ed. degree in 1974 and his Ph.D. degree in counseling and psychology from Auburn University in 1979. He then completed a twelve month, post-graduate study at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. In 1983, Archer became a professor of counseling and psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. He later served as assistant to the president at Saints Junior College in Lexington, Mississippi and assistant to the vice president at the Tuskegee Institute.

Archer wrote two memoirs, *Growing up Black in Rural Mississippi* published in 1991 and *Green Berets in the Vanguard* published in 2001. He received the Afro-Achievement Award in 1994 for distinguished lifetime achievement in education from the Dale City Afro-Achievement Committee. Archer also served as president of the Jennie Dean Project.

Archer passed away on February 24, 2014, at the age of 85.

## Related Entries

**Tuskegee University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.S.**

**Tuskegee University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.S.**

**Auburn University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Northern Virginia Community College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1956 to ?]

**Professor of Counseling and Psychology**

**Tuskegee University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1979 to 1987]

**Assistant to the Vice President**

**Saints Junior College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Assistant to the President**

**United States Army Special Forces** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1975 to 1983]

**Combat Medical Technician**

**Jennie Dean** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**President**