

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Julius Jackson

PERSON

**Jackson, Julius, 1944-**

**Alternative Names:** Julius Jackson;

**Life Dates:** January 6, 1944-

**Place of Birth:** Kansas City, Missouri, USA

**Residence:** Okemos, Michigan

**Occupations:** Microbiologist

## Biographical Note

Microbiologist Julius Jackson was born in 1944 to Virgil Lawrence Jackson, Sr. and Julia Esther Jones. He has two siblings, an older brother Virgil and a younger sister, Esther. Jackson attended Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, for one year before he received his A.B. and Ph.D. degrees in microbiology from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas in 1966 and 1969, respectively. He completed a National Institutes of Health (NIH) postdoctoral fellowship from 1969 to 1971 at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Following completion of the NIH fellowship, he continued to work at Purdue University as a postdoctoral research associate. In 1972, Jackson accepted a faculty appointment at the historically black Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee where he worked in a number of positions that included chair of the microbiology department.

In 1987, he joined the faculty of Michigan State University (MSU) in the Department of Microbiology & Public Health, later becoming a full professor and associate dean of the graduate school. From 1991 to 1993, Jackson took a leave of absence from MSU and served as dean of Arts and Sciences at Clark Atlanta University. Jackson directs the J-Lab, a research laboratory that incorporates mathematical and computer models to analyze the function of bacterial genes in cells. Jackson's wife, Dr. Patricia Ann Herring, collaborates with him on their work, which maps bacterial genomes to see how genes carry out the physiological processes of organisms. He has been an active mentor to students in his lab as well as a strong advocate for the importance of integrating math into the study of biology. Furthermore, Jackson has published numerous papers on the latter in addition to bacterial genomics. Beyond his research interests, he has been the director of several programs that recruit, support, and provide professional development to doctoral students in the science,

technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. These programs include the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Program and the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP), the latter supports underrepresented groups in these fields.

From 1995 to 1997, Jackson was the director of the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Because of his research on model bacterial genomes, he has served on several panels that include the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBM), and the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). Jackson received the William A. Hinton Research Training Award from the ASM for his work on bacterial genomes in 2000.

Jackson has three children, Rahsaan and Sajida with his first wife, the late Jalanda Lazelle Smith, and Ajani, with his wife Dr. Patricia Ann Herring. Jackson and his wife reside in Okemos, Michigan.

Julius Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 24, 2012.

## Related Entries

**Jones, Ulysses Simpson** [GRANDCHILDOf]  
Maternal Grandfather

**Jackson, Virgil** [SIBLINGOf]  
Brother

**Jackson, Esther** [SIBLINGOf]  
Sister

**Jackson, Felicia** [PARENTOf]  
Child

**Jackson, Rahsaan** [PARENTOf]  
Child

**Jackson, Sajida** [PARENTOf]  
Child

**Jackson, Sr., Virgil Lawrence** [CHILDOf]  
Father

**Jones, Julia Esther** [CHILDOf]  
Mother

**University of Kansas** [STUDENTOf]  
[from ? to ?]

A.B.

**University of Kansas** [STUDENTOf]  
[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

**Washington University in St. Louis** [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

**Clark Atlanta University** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from ? to ?]

**Dean of Arts and Sciences**

**American Academy of Microbiology** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from ? to ?]

**Fellow**

**National Institute of Health (NIH)** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1969 to 1971]

**Postdoctoral Fellow**

**Purdue University** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1971 to ?]

**Postdoctoral Fellow**

**Meharry Medical College** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1972 to ?]

**Chair of Microbiology Department**

**Michigan State University** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1987 to ?]

**Professor, Dept. of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics**

**Michigan State University** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1987 to ?]

**Assistant Dean of the Graduate School**

**National Science Foundation (NSF)** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1995 to 1997]

**Director for the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences**