

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lafayette Frederick

PERSON

Frederick, Lafayette, 1923-

Alternative Names: Lafayette Frederick;

Life Dates: March 19, 1923-December 29, 2018

Place of Birth: Dog Bog, Mississippi, USA

Residence: Tuskegee, AL

Work: Tuskegee, AL

Occupations: Botanist;

Biographical Note

Botanist Lafayette Frederick was born on March 9, 1923 in Dog Bog, Mississippi. Frederick's interest in botany began as an undergraduate student at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) where he was inspired by the famous botanist and plant chemist George Washington Carver. After earning his B.S. degree in biology from Tuskegee Institute in 1943 and his M.S. degree in botany from the University of Rhode Island in 1950, Frederick went on to graduate from Washington State University with his Ph.D. degree in plant pathology and botany. His doctoral thesis focused on spore development in fungi, systematics and ecology of the myxomycetes, and the Dutch elm disease.

Upon completion of his postdoctoral studies at Cornell University, the University of Illinois and the University of Michigan, Fredrick was hired as an assistant professor at Southern University in the biology department. There, he developed a botany concentration during his ten years at the school. He also developed a botany concentration at Atlanta University, where he chaired the biology department during his fourteen-year tenure. In 1958, Frederick was responsible for integrating the Association of Southeastern Biologists meeting, which had not allowed its African American members to attend. He also served as director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Academic Year Institute for Science Teachers. Frederick worked on several projects that involved studies on antifungal substances of a strain of bacterium. In 1976, Frederick was hired by Howard University where he went on to serve as a professor and chairman in the department of botany, acting dean for the College of Liberal Arts, and emeritus professor of biology.

Among Frederick's honors are an Honorary Doctorate of Science degree in botany and a Distinguished Alumni Award, from the University of Rhode Island; the Botanical Society of America Merit Award; the NSF Education and Human Resources Directorate Lifetime Achievement Award; the American Association for the Advancement of Science Lifetime Mentor Award; and a Tuskegee Institute Distinguished Alumni Merit Award. A species of Hawaiian shrub, *Cyrtandra Frederickii*, was named in his honor by Harold St. John, former chairman of the University of Hawaii department of botany.

Lafayette Fredrick was interviewed on The HistoryMakers on December 12, 2012.

Frederick passed away on December 29, 2018.

Related Entries

Dunbar Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Vashon High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

9th Grade

Hayti High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

10th Grade Diploma

Washington High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

12th Grade Diploma

Tuskegee University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

University of Hawaii at Manoa [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Part-time Graduate Student

Rhode Island State College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.S.

Washington State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Post-doctorate

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

Cornell University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

United States Navy [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 19441125 to 19460723]

Architectural Draftsman

Central State University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 19961215 to 19970730]

Professor

Kaiser Shipbuilding Co. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 194403 to 194411]

Electrical Draftsman

Howard University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 19760801 to 19930630]

Professor/Chairman/Acting Dean

Tuskegee University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 20110801 to ?]

Visiting Senior Scientist

Southern University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 19520901 to 19620730]

Professor

Atlanta University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 19620901 to 19760730]

Professor/Dean

National Institutes of Health (NIH) [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member and Chairman

Educational Testing Service Test Development Committee [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member and Chairman

Commission on Undergraduate Education in Biology [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

American Type Culture Collection Mycology Advisory Committee [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Smithsonian Foreign Currency Program Advisory Council [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Georgia Academy of Science [MEMBEROF]
[from 2004 to 2011]

President

Association of Southeastern Biologists [MEMBEROF]
[from 2002 to 2006]

President

American Institute of Biological Sciences Council [MEMBEROF]
[from 2008 to 2014]

Member-at-large