

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable James Gadsden

PERSON

Gadsden, James, 1948-

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable James Gadsden;

**Life Dates:** March 12, 1948-

**Place of Birth:** Charleston, South Carolina, USA

**Residence:** Bethesda, MD

**Occupations:** Foreign Ambassador

## Biographical Note

United States Ambassador (retired) James I. Gadsden was born on March 12, 1948 in Charleston, South Carolina. His father, James David Gadsden, was a janitor; his mother, Hazel Gaines Gadsden, a maid and housewife. After receiving his B.A. degree cum laude in economics from Harvard University in 1970, Gadsden enrolled in Stanford University and graduated from there in 1972 with his M.A. degree in East Asian Studies. Following graduation, he was awarded a mid-career fellowship from 1984 to 1985 at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs to study economics.

Gadsden's career with the U.S. Department of State began in 1972 as a political officer. He was then assigned to the U.S. Trade Center in Taipei in 1974 as a market research officer supporting U.S. export promotion programs. He continued promoting U.S. exports as a commercial officer at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, Hungary until 1979. In 1980, he became a staff assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs. From 1981 to 1997, Gadsden served as the European Communities desk officer at the State Department, economic and political officer at the U.S. Mission to the European Communities in Brussels, Counselor for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest. Returning to the United States in 1997, Gadsden was named Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, and then served as Special Negotiator for Agricultural Biotechnology in 2001.

After being nominated by President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Gadsden was sworn in as U.S. Ambassador to Iceland on October 24, 2002. In that position, he directed the implementation of U.S. foreign policy and U.S. government operations in Iceland. Returning to the United

States in 2005, Gadsden was appointed as Deputy Commandant and International Affairs Advisor at the National War College in Washington, D.C. until he retired in 2007. After retirement, he was recalled to serve as Senior Advisor for European Affairs at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York. In 2008, he became Diplomat-In-Residence and Lecturer in Public and International Affairs at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He is currently Senior Counselor for International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation in Princeton, New Jersey.

Gadsden is married to Sally Freeman Gadsden. They have two adult sons.

James I. Gadsden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 11, 2013.

## Related Entries

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

**M.A.**

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

**B.A.**

**Charles A. Brown High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Elisabeth Irwin High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Diploma**

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

**United States Department of State** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1980 to ?]

**Ambassador/Career Foreign Service Officer**

**Princeton University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1988 to 1995]

**Diplomat-In-Residence**

**Little Red School House & Elisabeth Irwin High School** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Trustee**

**Wildlife Trust (Eco Health Alliance)** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Member, Board of Directors**

