

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Joseph Monroe

PERSON

Monroe, Joseph, 1936-

Alternative Names: Joseph Monroe;

Life Dates: May 18, 1936-

Place of Birth: Rowland, North Carolina, USA

Residence: Greensboro, NC

Occupations: Computer Scientist; ;

Biographical Note

Computer scientist Joseph Monroe was born in North Carolina. Monroe received his B.S. degrees in mathematics, English, and French from North Carolina A & T State University in 1962. He then enrolled at Texas A & M University and graduated from there with his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in computer science in 1967 and 1972, respectively. Monroe was the first African American to earn a doctoral degree in computer science in the United States.

Upon graduation, Monroe was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and appointed as an associate professor of computer science at the U.S. Air Force Academy. From 1978 to 1987, he held various positions at the U.S. Air Force Academy, including as the Dean of the Faculty, chair of the Department of Electrical Engineering, chair of the Computer Science Department. Monroe went on to become the first African American appointed as a full professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy. While there, he was responsible for developing computer software systems such as the U.S. Air Force Manpower System, the U.S. Army Personnel System, U.S. Air Force Logistics systems, and the Armed Forces Intelligence Data Handling System. In addition, Monroe designed accredited computer science programs for the Egyptian Air Force Academy, and the Royal Thai Air Force Academy.

In 1987, Monroe joined the faculty at Fayetteville State University and served in various academic and administrative positions. He returned to North Carolina A & T State University in 1991 and was named Ronald E. McNair Endowed Professor and Chair of Computer Science. In 2000, Monroe assumed the additional role of Dean of the College of Engineering. Under his leadership, the Department of Computer Science and the Department of Engineering grew in size, increased funding, and hired the most tenured African American engineering professors in the United States. Monroe was a

founding member of the first computer science honor society, Upsilon Pi Epsilon, which is now an international society. He served on the board of directors for the Industries of the Blind, the board of directors for Computing at NASA, and the board that governs the practice of Engineering and Surveying in North Carolina.

Monroe was awarded the U.S. Department of Defense Superior Service Medal for Superior Service and Teaching in 1987, and the U.S. Air Force Legion of Merit Service Medal for Outstanding Teaching and Research in 1974, 1978, and 1982. In 1992, he was named National Technical Achiever of the Year by the National Technical Achievers Association.

Monroe is married to the former Sally McNair Monroe. They have two sons: Joseph Monroe, Jr. and Col. Robert Bruce Monroe.

Joseph Monroe was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on May 7, 2013.

Related Entries

North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Texas A&M University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.S.

Texas A&M University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

United States Air Force Academy [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1981]

Instructor

United States Air Force Academy [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1991 to ?]

Head, Department of Electrical Engineering

Fayetteville State University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1982 to 1992]

Vice Chancellor, Advancement and Academic Affairs

North Carolina A&T State University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1981 to ?]

Ronald E. McNair Endowed Chair Professor, Computer Science

North Carolina A&T State University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2000 to 2009]

Dean, College of Engineering

Computer Science Honor Society [MEMBEROf]
[from 1967 to ?]

Founder

Industries of the Blind [MEMBEROf]
[from 1995 to 2005]

Board of Directors

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) [MEMBEROf]
[from 1995 to 2000]

Board of Directors for Computing

North Carolina Engineering and Surveying Board [MEMBEROf]
[from 1998 to 2008]

Member