

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Samuel Williamson

PERSON

Williamson, Sam, 1949-

Alternative Names: Samuel Williamson;

Life Dates: March 5, 1949-

Place of Birth: Somerville, Tennessee, USA

Residence: Frederick, MD

Occupations: Atmospheric Scientist;

Biographical Note

Atmospheric scientist Samuel P. Williamson was born on March 5, 1949, in Somerville, Tennessee to the late Julius Williamson, Jr. and Izoula Smith. He graduated from W.P. Ware High School in 1967. Williamson received his B.S. degree in mathematics from Tennessee State University in 1971 and his B.S. degree in meteorology from North Carolina State University in 1972. He went on to earn his M.A. degree in management from Webster University in 1976. From 1996 to 1997, Williamson was a visiting Executive Fellow at the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government where he explored national security issues involving science, technology, and public policy.

In 1971, Williamson was hired as an elementary mathematics teacher in the Fayette County School System in Tennessee. Later in 1971, he began his atmospheric science career as a weather officer in the U.S. Air Force's Air Weather Service. In 1977, Williamson joined the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). For more than twelve years, he was NOAA's principal planner and ultimately the Director of the Joint System Program Office for the Next Generation Weather Radar (NEXRAD) WSR-88D, Doppler Weather Radar System through the design, development and initial deployment of this first major joint program among three Federal departments—the Departments of Commerce, Defense, and Transportation. Later, as a Senior Staff Associate for the National Science Foundation, Williamson enhanced science education. In his role as a senior advisor to the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Science, he helped shape the legislative agenda for science, space, and technology policy. In 1998, Williamson was appointed as the Federal Coordinator for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research. As the Federal Coordinator, he is accountable to the U.S. Congress and the Office of Management and Budget for systematic coordination and cooperation among 15

Federal departments, independent agencies, and executive offices with meteorology programs or interests to ensure the Federal government provides the best possible weather information and user services to the Nation. Under his leadership, significant advances were made in the areas of aviation weather, space weather, wildland fire weather, weather information for surface transportation, advanced modeling and data assimilation, and tropical cyclone research and operations.

Williamson is a member of the American Meteorological Society, the Montgomery College Foundation Board, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the National Guard Association. He also serves on the Committee for the Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability (CENRS) of the National Science and Technology Council.

Williamson is a recipient of the Presidential Rank Award (2010), the NOAA Distinguished Career Award (2010), the NOAA Bronze Medal (1996), and the National Guard Association of the United States Garde Nationale Trophy (1993). In 2006, Williamson was elected as a Fellow of the African Scientific Institute.

Samuel P. Williamson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on May 22, 2013.

Related Entries

Harvard University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.P.A. degree

Webster University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.A. degree

North Carolina State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S. degree

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

B.S.

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

Fayette Ware Comprehensive High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Diploma

United States Air Force [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1980 to ?]

Weather Officer

Fayette County School System [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1970 to ?]

Teacher

United States Department of Commerce [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1982 to ?]

Federal Coordinator for Meteorology

National Guard Association [MEMBEROf]

[from 1990 to ?]

Member

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) [MEMBEROf]

[from 1993 to 2000]

Member

Montgomery College Foundation Board [MEMBEROf]

[from 2000 to 2007]

Member

American Meteorological Society [MEMBEROf]

[from 2006 to ?]

Wx & Climate COMmisisoner

African Scientific Institute [MEMBEROf]

[from 2006 to ?]

Science Fellow