

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Richard Ernest Arrington, Jr.

PERSON

Arrington, Richard

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable Richard Ernest Arrington, Jr.;

**Life Dates:** October 19, 1934-

**Place of Birth:** Livingston, Alabama, USA

**Residence:** Birmingham, AL

**Occupations:** Political leader

## Biographical Note

Political leader Richard Arrington was born on October 19, 1934 in Livingston, Alabama to Richard Arrington, Sr. and Mary Bell Arrington. Arrington graduated from Fairfield Industrial High School in Fairfield, Alabama in 1951. He went on to attend Miles College in Fairfield, Alabama where he earned his B.S. degree in biology in 1955; his M.S. degree in biology from the University of Detroit in Detroit, Michigan in 1957 and his Ph.D. degree in zoology from the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma in 1966. Arrington later continued his post-doctoral work in higher education administration at Harvard University and the University of Michigan.

After graduating from the University of Detroit, Arrington returned to Miles College as an assistant professor of science from 1957 until 1963. In 1959, he served as a National Science Foundation Fellow in genetics at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and in radiation biology at the Medical College of the State University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa. Arrington then studied molecular biology at Washington University, St. Louis in 1960. He later returned to Miles College and served as acting dean and director of the summer school program. Arrington was then promoted to chair of the natural sciences department and became the dean of Miles College in 1966. In 1970, Arrington was named executive director of the Alabama Center for Higher Education and served until 1979. In the same year, he was hired as a part-time associate professor of biology at the University of Alabama, Birmingham. In 1971, Arrington was elected to the Birmingham City Council and won re-election in 1975. Arrington ran for mayor of the City of Birmingham and was elected as the first African American mayor in 1979. After twenty years as mayor, Arrington retired in 1999 and worked as a visiting professor of public service at the University of Alabama,

Birmingham until his retirement in 2003. In 2008, he published his memoir, *There's Hope for the World*.

Arrington has seven children: Anthony, Kenneth, Kevin, Angela, Erica, Matthew and Jennifer.

Richard Arrington was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on May 4, 2017.

## Related Entries

**Miles College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**University of Detroit Mercy** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**University of Oklahoma** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

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

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

**Miles College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1963 to 1970]

**Dean of College**

**City of Birmingham, Alabama** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1971 to 1979]

**City Council Member**

**Alabama Center of High Education** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1971 to 1979]

**Executive Director**

**City of Birmingham, Alabama** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1979 to 1999]

**Mayor**

**University of Alabama at Birmingham** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1999 to 2003]

**Professor**

**Miles College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2004 to ?]

**Visiting Professor**

