

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Robert L. Smith

PERSON

Smith, Robert L., 1936-

Alternative Names: Dr. Robert L. Smith;

Life Dates: December 20, 1937-

Place of Birth: Terry, Mississippi, USA

Residence: Jackson, MS

Work: Jackson, MS

Occupations: Professor; Physician

Biographical Note

Professor and physician Dr. Robert L. Smith was born on December 20, 1936 in Terry, Mississippi to Willie B. Smith and Lillie Mae Smith. He received his B.A. degree in chemistry from Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi in 1957, and his M.D. degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1961.

Smith completed his clinical training at the West Side Medical Clinic of Cook County Hospital in Chicago, Illinois and returned to Jackson, Mississippi and founded the Family Health Center, now known as the Central Mississippi Health Services, Inc. In 1964, Smith worked with the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) to provide medical services for civil rights workers during the Freedom Summer in Jackson, Mississippi as its first Southern Medical Field Director. Smith later worked as an assistant clinical professor of family medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical School, where he participated in the development of the Family Medicine Program as a co-principal investigator with the National Research Program's Arteriosclerotic Risks in Community Studies. Smith worked as an adjunct professor at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts, Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee and Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi as well as professor emeritus position in the department of community medicine at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. During his career, Smith also assisted in institutionalizing the pre-health program at Tougaloo College.

In 2011, part of Jackson Metro Parkway was renamed in honor of Dr. Robert L. Smith. In 2014, Smith received the Community Service Award from the Mississippi Board of Trustees of the State of Institutions of Higher Learning, and was also named Diversity

Educator of the Year. In 2017, the American Medical Association presented Smith with its Medal of Valor Award for his civil rights work. In the same year, the Mississippi State Senate honored Smith for his community health work. Smith was a charter diplomat of the American Board of Family Physicians and a charter fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians. He was an active staff member of Mississippi Baptist Health Systems, St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital, and Central Mississippi Medical Center.

Dr. Robert L. Smith was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on December 13, 2017 and April 23, 2019.

Related Entries

Terry Grove School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Hinds County Agricultural High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Tougaloo College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Howard University College of Medicine [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.D.

Central Mississippi Health Services, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1963 to ?]

President & CEO

University of Mississippi Medical Center [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Assistant Clinical Professor

Tufts University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1965 to ?]

Adjunct Professor

Jackson State University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Adjunct Professor

St. Dominic's Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Senior Active Staff

Baptist Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Senior Active Staff

Merit Hospital System [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Senior Active Staff

Tougaloo College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1962 to ?]

Director of Health Services

Brown University School of Medicine [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Faculty Emeritus

Cook County Hospital [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1959 to 1961]

Resident in Obstetrics and Gynecology

Mississippi State Hospital [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1962 to 1963]

Obstetrician and Gynecologist

Tougaloo College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1962 to ?]

Volunteer

Private Practice [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1963 to ?]

Obstetrician and Gynecologist

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

National Medical Association [MEMBEROf]
[from 1961 to ?]

Member

Medical Committee for Civil Rights [MEMBEROf]
[from 1963 to ?]

Founder

American Board of Family Physicians [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Charter Diplomat

American Academy of Family Physicians [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Charter Fellow

Medical Committee for Human Rights [MEMBEROf]

[from 1964 to ?]

Founder

Tufts Delta Health Center [MEMBEROf]

[from 1965 to ?]

Founder

Child Development Group of Mississippi [MEMBEROf]

[from 1964 to ?]

Founding Medical Director

Friends of Children of Mississippi [MEMBEROf]

[from 1965 to ?]

Founding Medical Director

American Medical Association [MEMBEROf]

[from 1965 to ?]

Member