

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Patricia McGraw

PERSON

McGraw, Patricia, 1935-

Alternative Names: Patricia McGraw;

Life Dates: May 6, 1935-

Place of Birth: Little Rock, Arkansas, USA

Residence: Little Rock, AR

Occupations: Professor

Biographical Note

Professor Patricia McGraw was born on May 6, 1935 in Little Rock, Arkansas to William and Ruth Washington. She attended South End Elementary School, Dunbar Junior High School, and graduated from Dunbar Senior High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. She attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, and received her B.A. degree in language arts from San Francisco State College in San Francisco, California in 1957, where she was the first African American member of the Phi Beta Kappa honor society. She received her M.A. degree in special studies in literature from San Francisco State College in 1967 and Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri in 1982

McGraw went on to teach at Philander Smith College in Little Rock in the 1960s and then joined the faculty at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1971 as the first African American professor. She went on to establish the McGraw Learning Institute in Little Rock to teach kindergarten through sixth grade. McGraw left the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to join the University of Central Arkansas in Conway faculty in a faculty tenured position as professor of English and African/African American Studies. She served in this position from 1987 to 2000, a total of thirteen years, until her retirement.

During her career, McGraw traveled to Africa numerous times for her humanitarian work and educational training. In 1999, her work was honored by members of the Rwandese Parliament with the presentation of a lake in her honor by the name of Lake Kivu, which is located between the East African countries of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

McGraw, a scholar, professor, and author, has published several books, including the

novel *Hush! Hush! Somebody's Calling My Name* in 2000, and more than 500 articles and poems. She also received numerous teaching excellence and community service awards on the local, state, and national levels. In 2004, she was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame. A longtime member of the National Association of Black Storytellers, she was a founding member of the Afro-American Genealogical and Historical Society in Arkansas, and a member of the Rufus K. Young Christian Church. She has co-hosted television shows and been the creator of a one-woman show, *A Profile of Four Black Women: Look Upon Them and Be Renewed*, which has been performed in Africa, the West Indies, and Canada. She has been committed to preserving her family legacy with the Washington Heritage House, the former residence of her parents, located across the street from the historic Central High School in Little Rock.

McGraw, the widow of the late Tyrone Power McGraw, has three children.

Patricia McGraw was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 13, 2018.

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