

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with John M. Hairston, Jr.

PERSON

Hairston, John M., 1943-

**Alternative Names:** John M. Hairston, Jr.;

**Life Dates:** January 16, 1943-

**Place of Birth:** Johnson City, Tennessee, USA

**Residence:** Cleveland, OH

**Occupations:** Educator

## Biographical Note

Educator John M. Hairston, Jr. was born on January 16, 1943 in Johnson City, Tennessee. His family later settled in Gary, West Virginia, where Hairston attended Wilcoe Grade School. Hairston graduated from Gary District High School, and went on to receive his B.A. degree in English at Bluefield State College in 1964. He then earned his M.A. degree in education administration from Cleveland State University in 1971.

Hairston began his teaching career in 1964 at Kennard Junior High school in Cleveland, Ohio. He also taught at East High School. During his twenty-seven year career with the Cleveland Public School District, Hairston held various positions such as project manager in the compensatory education department, staff development director, and chief of community relations. In 1991, he was hired as the director of external programs at the NASA John H. Glenn Research Center in Cleveland. In this role, he worked closely with U.S. Congressman Louis Stokes and Director Julian Manly Earls to facilitate a relationship between the center and the Cleveland community. Hairston promoted scientific literacy and developed outreach programs to support the community and local businesses. He continued to serve in the school district as an appointee on the Cleveland School Board, receiving the appointment from the state schools superintendent, John M. Goff. He later joined the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections in 1998. In 2006, Hairston acted as the interim assistant administrator for the Office of Education at NASA John H. Glenn Research Center before returning to the external programs department later that same year. He retired from the center in 2008. From 2008 to 2011, Hairston acted as the chief of communications for Cleveland Public Schools, after being recruited by then chief executive officer Dr. Eugene T.W. Sanders.

Hairston joined the board of trustees at the Cleveland Public Library; and, in 2012, he became the district director for the 11th District Congressional Office in Warrensville

Heights, Ohio under U.S. Congresswoman Marcia Fudge. He also served as co-chair of the city of Cleveland's 177m Empowerment Zone initiative, and was president of the Cuyahoga Board of Elections for four years.

Hairston lives in Cleveland, Ohio, and has three children: James Colvin, John Hairston, III, and Tracy Hairston Brown.

John M. Hairston, Jr. was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 28, 2018.

## **Related Entries**