

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lt. Col. John White

PERSON

**White, John A., 1924-**

**Alternative Names:** Lt. Col. John White;

**Life Dates:** October 27, 1924-

**Place of Birth:** Savannah, Georgia, USA

**Residence:** Savannah, GA

**Occupations:** Police Officer;

## Biographical Note

Lieutenant Colonel John A. White was born on October 27, 1924, in Savannah, Georgia, to Gussie and Bonaparte White. He graduated from Beach Cuyler High School and attended Georgia State College (later Savannah State University).

White enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1943 and received training at Montford Point, North Carolina. He served in the Marines during WWII until 1946 as part of the 51st Defense Battalion in the South Pacific. That same year, he was recruited by the Savannah Police Department, becoming the first African American law officer in Georgia in 1947 as one of "The Original Nine." He was promoted to corporal in 1956. In 1984, he retired. White also is a minister in the AME Church, pastoring at St. James AME Church in Savannah.

White has received commendations from J. Edgar Hoover, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton. In 2012, White and the other surviving Montford Point Marines received the Congressional Gold Medal. In 2018, White was recognized by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police. In 2021, Bouhan Street at Waters Avenue, where White lived his entire life in Savannah, was officially designated Lieutenant John White Avenue.

White lives in Savannah, Georgia. He and his wife, Sallie Catherine Williams White, had five children.

Lieutenant Colonel John A. White was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 16, 2021.

## Related Entries

**Paulsen Street School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Alfred E. Beach High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Savannah State University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**United States Marine Corps** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1943 to 1946]

**Marine**

**Savannah Police Department** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1947 to 1984]

**Police Officer**

**St. James AME Church** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Minister**

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