Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable John Rogers, Sr.

Rogers, John W., Sr., 1918-2014

Alternative Names: The Honorable John Rogers, Sr.; John W. Rogers, Sr.

Life Dates: September 3, 1918-January 21, 2014

Place of Birth: Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Juvenile Court Judge; Tuskegee Airman

Biographical Note

John Rogers, Sr. was born on September 3, 1918, in Knoxville, Tennessee. His mother died when he was four and his father died when he was twelve. Rogers and his sisters moved to Chicago, Illinois, to live with an uncle, Henry Tanner, who was very benevolent and proved to be a great role model for Rogers.

From a young age, Rogers wanted to fly. After receiving his pilot's license, he got the chance of a lifetime when he was drafted into the U.S. Air Force. He was shipped off to Tuskegee, Alabama, where he became part of the legendary 99th Squadron of the Tuskegee Airmen. As an Airman he excelled, gaining a reputation as a combat pilot and flying more than 100 missions. By 1944 Rogers gained the rank of captain.

Upon his return to Chicago, Rogers decided he did not want to be a teacher and applied to law school at the University of Chicago. While there, he met and married Jewel Stradford, the daughter of a prominent family and a fellow law school student. Rogers served on the bench in Illinois as a Juvenile Court judge for twenty-one years. During that time, he developed a strong reputation as a justice who was both committed and fair.

Related Entries

Frances E. Willard Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Edward Tilden Career Community Academy High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

South Side Junior College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Chicago [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

United States Army Air Corps [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1965 to 1970]

Captain

Illinois Juvenile Court [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1976]

Judge

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]