

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Dr. Latta Thomas

PERSON

Thomas, Latta R.

Alternative Names: Reverend Dr. Latta Thomas; Rev. Dr. Latta Thomas

Life Dates: October 12, 1927-December 10, 2021

Place of Birth: Union, South Carolina, USA

Residence: Miami, FL

Occupations: Chaplain;

Biographical Note

The Reverend Dr. Latta Roosevelt Thomas, liberation theologian, was born on October 12, 1927, in Union, South Carolina. Thomas graduated from Union's Sims High School in 1947. His desire for education and his work ethic helped him to earn an A.A. from Friendship College in Rock Hill, South Carolina in 1949. Thomas was salutatorian of his class at Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1951, where he received his B.A. Because of his high grades, the Pepsi-Cola Company awarded him a graduate scholarship. Moving to Rochester, New York, Thomas earned a B.D. from Colgate Rochester Seminary in 1955. Meanwhile, Thomas became a full-time minister at Monumental Baptist Church in Elmira, New York, where he met his wife, Bessie "Bea" Lowery.

In 1966, Thomas earned a master's of sacred theology degree from Andover Newton Theological Seminary. At the request of a former mentor and friend, he returned to his alma mater, Benedict College. During his thirty-year tenure at Benedict, Thomas served as school chaplain and head of the Religion and Philosophy Department. He also served as pastor of Second Calvary Baptist Church in Columbia for more than twenty years. Thomas earned a doctor of ministry degree from Andover Newton in 1973. As a progressive theologian, Thomas has published numerous articles and two books, *Biblical Faith and the Black American* and *The Biblical God and Human Suffering*.

Three important factors influenced Thomas' philosophy of life: the Judeo-Christian tradition, the black American experience, and the people who took an interest in his academic and professional development. Thomas retired in 2000. He and his wife lived in Columbia, South Carolina, where Thomas spent his time perfecting his Greek and reading for pleasure. He was a member of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, the NAACP, and was past chairman of the South Carolina Academy of Religion.

The Reverend Dr. Latta Roosevelt Thomas passed away on December 10, 2021 at age 94.

Related Entries

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Monumental Baptist Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Minister

Benedict College [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1953 to 1995]

School Chaplain and Head of the Religion and Philosophy Department

Second Calvary Baptist Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1975]

Pastor