

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Adam Wade

PERSON

Wade, Adam

**Alternative Names:** Adam Wade; Patrick Henry Wade

**Life Dates:** March 17, 1935-

**Place of Birth:** Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

**Residence:** Montclair, NJ

**Occupations:** Actor; Singer; Stage Producer

## Biographical Note

Adam Wade was born Patrick Henry Wade on March 17, 1935 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Pauline Simpson and Henry Oliver Wade, Jr. Wade was raised by his grandparents in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood and graduated from Westinghouse High School in 1952. He went on to attend Virginia State College, but married his high school sweetheart and soon left school in order to support his young family.

Wade started singing while still in high school. In 1958, he got his first opportunity to record for the Coed Records label in New York City. Two years later, he moved to New York full-time, and within six months, he was singing at the city's most prestigious club, the Copacabana. Wade's first hit, "Ruby," was released that same year. He had three top ten singles in 1961: "Take Good Care of Her," "The Writing on the Wall" and "As If I Didn't Know." Wade had less success after moving over to Epic Records later that year. In the late 1960s, he shifted his focus to acting. Wade began doing commercials and voice-over work. In 1970, he starred in the film *Wanderlove*. Wade had a number of supporting roles in films in the early 1970s, and he began to be featured on television, in soaps like *The Guiding Light* and black-oriented sitcoms like *Sanford & Son* and *Good Times*.

In 1975, Wade began hosting the television game show *Musical Chairs*, becoming the first black game show host. In 1978, he restarted his recording career. Wade also starred in an all-black production of *Guys and Dolls* in Las Vegas, Nevada. In 1983, Wade and his wife, Jeree Wade, started their own production company called SONGBIRD'S UNLIMITED PRODUCTIONS. They have produced many African American historical revues, including the off Broadway musical, *Shades of Harlem* which opened at the Village Gate in New York in 1983 and recently stopped touring in 2005. In the

1980s and 1990s, Wade continued to appear regularly on stage and screen including an episode of Hill Street Blues. In April of 2007, Wade began the national tour of the hit Broadway play, The Color Purple, playing the role of “Old Mister Johnson”. Wade has also taken turns as a director, writer and producer. He has received Audelco and Clio Awards for his work.

Over forty years after leaving college, Wade returned to school, earning his B.A. degree from Lehman College and his M.A. degree from Brooklyn College. He works as an adjunct professor of speech and theater at Long Island University and Bloomfield College.

Wade has been married to his wife, Jeree, for twenty-five years.

Adam Wade was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 27, 2007.

## Related Entries

**Westinghouse Academy** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Lehman College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**Brooklyn College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.A.**

**Virginia State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**John Morrow Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Larimer School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Jonas Salk polio research team** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Kauffmann's** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Retail**

**Coed Records** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Musician**

**'The Color Purple'** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2007 to ?]

## **Cast**

**Actors' Equity Association** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

## **Member**

**Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists  
(SAG-AFTRA)** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

## **Member**

**Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists  
(SAG-AFTRA)** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

## **Member**

**New York State United Teachers** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

## **Member**

**Al Fann Theatrical Ensemble** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

## **Member**

, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.