

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Woodie King, Jr.

PERSON

King, Woodie

**Alternative Names:** Woodie King, Jr.;

**Life Dates:** July 27, 1937-

**Place of Birth:** Bladwin Springs, Alabama, USA

**Residence:** New York, New York

**Work:** New York, New York

**Occupations:** Stage Director; Theater Director

## Biographical Note

Award winning theater director Woodie King, Jr., was born on July 27, 1937, in Baldwin Springs, Alabama, to parents Ruby and Woodie King, Sr. Attending high school in Detroit, King graduated in 1956; he then went on to attend Leman College in New York, and later earned his M.F.A. degree from Brooklyn College.

Following his high school graduation in 1956, King worked for Ford Motor Company as an arc welder for the three years. In 1959, King went to work for the city of Detroit as a draftsman. In 1965, King joined Mobilization for Youth, where he spent the next five years working as the cultural director.

In 1970, King founded the New Federal Theatre and the National Black Touring Circuit in New York City, where he remained as producing director throughout his career. King produced shows both on and off Broadway, and directed performances across the country in venues such as the New York Shakespeare Festival; the Cleveland Playhouse; Center Stage of Baltimore; and the Pittsburgh Public Theatre. King's work earned him numerous nominations and awards over the years, including a 1988 NAACP Image Award for his direction of Checkmates, and 1993 Audelco Awards for Best Director and Best Play for his production of Robert Johnson: Trick The Devil; he also received an Obie Award for Sustained Achievement. King was awarded an honorary doctorate in humane letters from Wayne State University, and a doctorate of fine arts from the College of Wooster.

In addition to his directing and producing of theater, King wrote extensively about the theater industry; he contributed to numerous magazines, such as Black World, Variety,

and The Tulane Drama Review, as well as authoring a number of books.

## Related Entries

**Bright Meyer Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

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

**Barbour Magnet Middle School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Cass Technical High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**diploma**

**Barbour Magnet Middle School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Smith Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Ford Motor Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1956 to 1959]

**Arc Welder**

**City of Detroit** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to 1975]

**Draftsman**

**Mobilization for Youth** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1963 to ?]

**Cultural Director**

**New Federal Theatre** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to ?]

**Founder**

**National Black Touring Circuit** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to ?]

**Founder**