

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Matthew George

PERSON

George, Matthew, 1949-

**Alternative Names:** Matthew George;

**Life Dates:** February 15, 1949-

**Place of Birth:** Birmingham, Alabama, USA

**Residence:** Silver Spring, MD

**Work:** Washington, D.C.

**Occupations:** Biochemist; Geneticist

## Biographical Note

Biochemist Matthew George was born on February 15, 1949 in Birmingham, Alabama. George was awarded an undergraduate scholarship to attend Wiley College in Marshall, Texas where he received his B.S. degree in chemistry and biology in 1971. George went on to earn his M.S. degree in microbiology and biochemistry in 1974 from Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University). In 1982, George graduated with his Ph.D. degree in biochemistry from the University of California, Berkeley.

From 1981 to 1984, George studied genetics and biochemistry at the San Diego Zoo and the National Cancer Institute in Frederick, Maryland. George's career at Howard University College of Medicine began in 1984 when he became an assistant professor of biochemistry. In 1992, he was promoted to associate professor. George's research focused on the evolution and interactions of mitochondrial DNA as well as cancer metastasis. He was instrumental in the development of the "mitochondrial Eve hypothesis," which attempts to explain the origin of humankind. George studies the molecular structure and behavior of mitochondrial DNA which traced humans back to a common ancestor that lived in Africa about 200,000 years ago. Between 1995 and 1997, George served as senior scientist on the African Burial Ground Project where he traced 200 year old remains back to West African locations by analyzing DNA from bones. Since 2001, George has served as chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Howard University College of Medicine.

George has authored numerous scientific research articles, which have appeared in journals such as the Journal of Molecular Biological Evolution. In addition, his research has been funded by prestigious organizations such as the National Institute of Health,

the National Cancer Institute and the National Center for Human Genome Research. His research on mitochondrial DNA was featured in the exhibit “Science in American Life,” found in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. In addition to his research, George has mentored research students including several dissertation prize winners.

George lives in Silver Spring, Maryland with his wife Yolanda George, who is an education program director at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

George Matthew was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on January 17, 2013.

## Related Entries

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

**B.S.**

**Clark Atlanta University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.S.**

**University of California, Berkeley** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Ph.D.**

**Atlanta University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to 1970]

**Ford Foundation Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow**

**Atlanta University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1971 to 1973]

**National Science Foundation Trainee**

**University of California, Berkeley** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1974 to 1980]

**Graduate Fellow**

**San Diego Zoo** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1981 to 1983]

**Post-Doctoral Fellow**

**National Cancer Institute** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1983 to 1984]

**Fellow, Genetics & Biochemistry**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1984 to 1992]

**Assistant Professor of Biochemistry**

**National Cancer Institute** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1984 to 1986]

**Guest Researcher**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1990 to 1990]

**Faculty Mentor of Graduate Student**

**National Center for Human Genome Research** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1991 to 1993]

**Planning Grant Co-Investigator**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1992 to ?]

**Associate Professor of Biochemistry**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1992 to 1996]

**Chairman, Minority Affairs Committee, American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1999 to 2001]

**Interim Chair, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology**

**Howard University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2001 to ?]

**Chair, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology**

**Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Association of Medical and Graduate Departments of Biochemistry** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]