

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Roselyn Williams

PERSON

Williams, Roselyn E. (Roselyn Elaine)

**Alternative Names:** Roselyn Williams;

**Life Dates:** November 1, 1950-

**Place of Birth:** Tallahassee, Florida, USA

**Residence:** Tallahassee, FL

**Work:** Tallahassee, FL

**Occupations:** Mathematician;

## Biographical Note

Mathematician Roselyn Elaine Williams was born on November 1, 1950 in Tallahassee, Florida. Her father, Robert Williams, was a World War II veteran; her mother, Lucile Wynn, an educator. Born in the Florida A & M University (FAMU) Hospital, Williams grew up in academia and attended the nursery, elementary, and high schools on FAMU's campus. Williams then enrolled in Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia where she was mentored by Dr. Etta Falconer, chair of the mathematics department, and Dr. David Blackwell during a summer program at the University of California, Berkeley. She graduated from Spelman College with her B.S. degree in mathematics in 1972. Williams went on to earn her M.S. degree in mathematics from the University of Florida in 1974, and her Ph.D. degree in mathematics from Florida State University in 1988.

In 1974, Williams began her career in higher education as an instructor at Florida A & M University. She taught there for five years and then spent two semesters at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia as an assistant professor of mathematics. After receiving her doctoral degree in 1988, Williams returned to Florida A & M University and was appointed as an associate professor in the mathematics department. In 2007, she was named chairperson of the mathematics department where she served until 2005. From 1990 through 2009, she served on the steering committee of the Sunshine State Scholars, a state-funded project that recognize outstanding high school students in mathematics and science. At Florida A & M University, she served on several campus committees to enhance undergraduate research and assess the performance of students in STEM disciplines.

Williams has coordinated programs to promote STEM education for students at all levels of education, including Alliance for Production of African American PhDs in the Mathematical Sciences (Alliance 1 + Alliance 2), the Florida A & M University Interdisciplinary Research Experience for Undergraduates (FAMU-IREU), the Florida A & M University Computer Science, Engineering Technology and Scholarship Program (CSEM Scholars), Research Experiences for Undergraduate Faculty (REUF), and Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education for Women (EDGE for Women).

Williams served as the treasurer/secretary for the National Association of Mathematicians (NAM), the Mathematical Association of America (MAA), and American Mathematical Society (AMS). She also served on the advisory board of the B. L. Perry Branch of the Leon County Public Library. Williams is a member of the board of the C. K. Steele Scholarship Foundation, Inc., the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. In 2008, Williams' engagement for gender equality at the workplace was recognized by a presentation at the "Workshop on Inequality, Growth and Development" at the United Nations Summit in New York City.

Roselyn Williams was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 2, 2013.

## Related Entries

**Florida State University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Ph.D. degree**

**University of Florida** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Spelman College** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**B.S.**

**FAMU High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Florida A&M University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1982 to ?]

**National Association of Mathematicians (NAM)** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]