

Joseph L. White

By: Gudon Ahmed

Joseph L. White was born on December 19th, 1932, in Lincoln, Nebraska, and then his family decided to move to Minneapolis, Minnesota. In Minneapolis, after his dad divorced his mom, they moved to California to live with his Aunt. But he found the same discrimination he faced in Minneapolis in San Francisco. After being told he could not wait tables at a restaurant, his Aunt motivated him to pursue post-secondary education. He pursued his undergraduate degree at San Francisco State University to obtain a degree in psychology. During his undergraduate, he started as a C+ student but improved his grades by the time he graduated from College. Then went off to serve in the U.S. Army in 1954 and was considered one of the first people of color to enroll in a Master's program at San Francisco State University. In 1958, he entered the Clinical Psychology doctoral program at the University of Michigan. During this time, the University of Michigan and the University of Colorado were the only two accepting honor students of African American descent. After obtaining his Ph. D in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan and excelling at the program, he became a professor at the California State University, Long Beach. Dr. White advocated for educational equality to aid the success of underrepresented students of color. He established the Education Opportunity program. This program provides educational opportunities for more than 250,000 low-income and in the state of California who were first-generation college students. Through this program, Dr. White aided students by helping them achieve their college degrees and go on to their professional careers and mentored 100 Ph.D. students in psychology. Dr. White founded the Association of black Psychology in 1986; wrote an article featured in Ebony magazine, which focused on changing the perception of black psychology. It allowed for a space to include diverse backgrounds in clinical studies and treatment plans. For 50 years, Dr. White took part in various careers within the psychology field: psychology and mental as an administrator, clinical supervisor, writer, consultant, and practicing psychologist. He served as a professor of Social Science at the University of California Irvine for 25 years. Dr. White contributed by teaching, supervising psychology, mentoring, and being director of ethnic studies and across cultural

programs, which was the only kind in the University of California systems. Dr. White published books include the psychology of Blacks: An African-American Perspective (1984), The Troubled Adolescent (1989), and Black Man Emerging. Dr. White received various prestigious awards due to his commitment to education and community service. These include the Citation of Achievement in Psychology and Community Service, presented by President Bill Clinton in (1994); the Janet E. Helms Award for mentoring and scholarship in psychology and education, honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Minnesota (2007); Alumnus of the Year from San Francisco State University (2008); and a Presidential Citation from the American Psychological Association (2015). He received the University of California Irvine Alumni Association's Extraordinarius Award in (2004).