

## George Henderson/Biography

In 1967, Dr. George Henderson became the University of Oklahoma's third full-time African American faculty member at the Norman campus. In 1969, he became the Sylvan N. Goldman Professor of Human Relations, Education and Sociology. Later, he was appointed to three other distinguished professorships: David Ross Boyd Professor, Regents' Professor, and Kerr-McGee Presidential Professor. After he became the Goldman Professor, he founded the Human Relations Department, which he chaired for 20 years. From 1996 to 2000, he was Dean of the College of Liberal Studies. Thus, he was the first African American in Oklahoma to hold a distinguished professorship; and he was the first African American at the University of Oklahoma to create a degree-granting department; and the first African American dean of a degree-granting college on the Norman campus. Although he retired from the University in 2006, he still teaches on a part-time basis.

A civil rights pioneer in higher education in Oklahoma, George Henderson has achieved many other notable accomplishments. His awards and honors include being the recipient of the OU Regents Superior Teaching Award (1977); University of Oklahoma and University of Oklahoma Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award (1992); American Association for Higher Education's Black Caucus Award for Outstanding Educational Service (1993); C.V. Ramana Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Mental Health of Oklahoma's Children (1996); Outstanding Professor Award, University of Oklahoma Interfraternity Council and Pan-Hellenic Association (1997); Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence Medal for the Outstanding College and University Professor (2000); State of Oklahoma Black Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award (2003); Induction into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame (2003); Induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame (2003); Career Achievement Award from University of Oklahoma College of Education (2003); Trailblazer Award for Distinguished Service, University of Oklahoma's Black Alumni Society's Norman Chapter; Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, University of Oklahoma (2011); Induction into the Oklahoma African American Hall of Fame (2012); Distinguished Service Award, University of Oklahoma's College of Arts and Sciences (2019); Susan Harjo Social Justice Award, University of Oklahoma's Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies, National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (2020); Award of Distinction, University of Oklahoma College of Education (2021).

The Henderson Scholars Program and the Henderson-Tolson Cultural Center on The University of Oklahoma's Norman campus bear his name. In 2015, *Oklahoma Today Magazine* named Dr. Henderson one of the forty-five most influential African American Oklahomans. Professor Henderson has taught university courses and spoken at conferences and workshops throughout the United States and internationally. His community service activities include being a race relations consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense; U.S. Justice Department school desegregation programs; U.S. Peace Corps; U.S. Head Start Program; and the Oklahoma Legal Aid services.

He has written 35 books and 50 articles; presented papers at over 100 professional conferences; been a consultant to dozens of state and national organizations; and has been a keynote speaker at over 200 student meetings. Prominent among his books are *To Live in Freedom: Human Relations Today and Tomorrow* (1972); *Human Relations: From Theory to Practice* (1974); *Cultural Diversity in the Workplace* (1994); *Migrants, Immigrants and Slaves* (1995); *Human*

*Relations Issues in Management* (1996); *Our Souls to Keep: Black/White Relations in America* (1999); *Psychosocial Aspects of Disability* (2004); *Race and the University: A Memoir* (2010); *A Human Relations Approach to Multiculturalism in K-12 Schools* (2013); *Introduction to Human Relations Studies* (2016); and *Cultural Diversity, Inclusion and Justice: Being a Community Activist* (2020). In 2011, the Oklahoma Historical Society selected *Race and the University* as the Outstanding Book on Oklahoma History published in 2010.

In 2011, Dr. Henderson and his wife Barbara were recipients of the Xenia Institute's Sam Mathews Social Justice Award. They were the first African American property owners in Norman. They are the parents of seven children and the grandparents of eight grandchildren. Dr. Henderson's master's degree in sociology and Ph.D. in educational sociology are from Wayne State University in Detroit.