

# The Augusta Chronicle

## Authority on black history inspired by predecessors

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By Timothy Cox  
Staff Writer  
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James Edward Carter III is often called Augusta's black history guru.

It's a title he says he accepts but doesn't dwell on. He says it's more important that people realize Black History Month promotes a healthy awareness -- regardless of ethnic background.

A lifelong resident of Augusta, Mr. Carter, known as "Jimmy," said he's not a formal historian but has acquired knowledge by listening to stories passed down by his father and grandfather, both dentists.

"Augusta has a very rich history and the black experience is a very prominent part of it," he said.

He also learned from listening to his father's friends -- men such as Dr. Benjamin Mays and Armour Blackburn.

Dr. Mays was the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s mentor and a president of Morehouse College.

Mr. Blackburn, an Augusta native, has a statue and student center honoring him at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Carter grew up on Augusta Avenue, a stone's throw away from Lucy Laney High School, from where he graduated in 1955.

He attended Howard University and planned to follow the family path into dentistry, but he became a schoolteacher instead.

"The D.C. experience was fascinating for a young kid from Augusta," he said. "My parents both attended Howard and I had relatives in Washington, so I was quite familiar with the territory."

At Howard, he heard lectures from notables such as Adam Clayton Powell Jr., W.E.B. DuBois and Dr. King.

Mr. Carter also witnessed the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom in May 1957, which preceded the 1963 March on Washington.

He finished his undergraduate studies at Paine College in biology.

Mr. Carter, an only child, credits his father and mother, Marjorie Butler Carter, for whetting his appetite for history.

He also credits others such as Joe Goudy, Philip Waring, William Brown, "Coach" John Tutt and the Rev. A.C. Griggs for keeping Augusta's black history alive.

Erick Montgomery, the executive director of Historic Augusta, says Mr. Carter is a valuable resource for all Augustans.

"He fills a longtime void that was ignored far too long," Mr. Montgomery said.

Christine Betts, the executive director of Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History, calls Mr. Carter "a consultant and scholar who's very knowledgeable about our community's history."

Mr. Montgomery and Mrs. Betts both acknowledged Mr. Carter's collaboration with late Augusta historian Ed Cashin on several projects, including a book about Augusta's Springfield Baptist Church, considered by many historians the oldest black church in the nation.

"I initially pursued history by listening to stories at home. In high school I started doing my own research. It's my passion," Mr. Carter said.

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### **JAMES EDWARD CARTER III**

**JOB:** Retired schoolteacher and Medical College of Georgia administrator/recruiter

**AGE:** 69

**FAMILY:** wife, Dr. Judy Carter, two adult sons

**EDUCATION:** Paine College, biology degree; advanced studies

**FRATERNAL AFFILIATION:** Omega Psi Phi and Sigma Pi Phi (Boule).

**ARMY:** Two-year stint, medical trainer.

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