

BLACK MATH HISTORY

HIDDEN FIGURES REVEALED

DR. WILLIAM MCWORTER, JR.

Dr. William McWorter, Jr. is the first Black person to earn a PhD in Mathematics from The Ohio State University. He was born (1932) and raised in Cleveland, Ohio and is a hidden part of history from the state of Ohio. His love for mathematics showed in his research and teaching, and is an example of someone who believed that persistence was more important than anything else for those who loved math and science.

Dr. McWorter graduated from Glenville High School in Cleveland in 1958. He then went on to earn three degrees from The Ohio State University in 1958 (BS), 1959 (MS), and 1963 (PhD). After he earned his doctoral degree he started work in Canada at the University of British Columbia before returning to The Ohio State University where he worked until 2009. He was an expert in studying shapes called fractals using computing algorithms.



Some things to think about...

- Dr. William McWorter, Jr. was the first Black person to earn a PhD in mathematics from The Ohio State University. What do you think this was like for him? What other Black mathematicians have you learned about? What other Black people do you know that were the 'first' to do something?
- Dr. William McWorter, Jr. was born in Cleveland, Ohio and went on to attend college and then graduate school also in Ohio at The Ohio State University. Have you ever considered going to college in Ohio?
- Dr. William McWorter, Jr. did math research that allowed him to move to Canada to work with other mathematicians before returning to Ohio. If you were a researcher, where would you like to travel for work?
- Dr. William McWorter, Jr. loved teaching math in creative ways at The Ohio State University. What have some of your favorite math classes been like?
- What do you imagine it is like to be a mathematician? Dr. McWorter was a professor, what other kinds of jobs could you do with a math background?