



Dr. John Henry Rivers Class of 2011

John Henry Rivers was born in Louisiana on December 31, 1940. He and his mother came to Oroville in 1949 where he entered Burbank School as a third grader. He then attended Bird Street and Central Schools before moving on to Oroville High School (OHS) in 1956. Growing up, he worked as a box boy at Safeway. He graduated from OHS in 1960 with an overall grade point average of 3.5, which placed him in the top twenty of his class. He was one of four student speakers at commencement exercises.

John Henry lettered in football, basketball and track during his four years at OHS and was an undefeated boxer. He was Associated Student Body President as a senior as well as President of the Future Teachers of America Club. He served local elementary school students and teachers by donating time as a classroom aide.

Following graduation from OHS, John Henry attended Chico State College (CSC), where he founded the Black Student League, was a 125 pound All-American boxer in 1961 and 1962, and was on the junior varsity football team. He led his class as president in both his freshman and sophomore years. His collegiate career was interrupted by serving two years in the military. While in the United States Army, he was an All-Army champion boxer in 1966. He achieved the rank of private first class and received his honorable discharge. He returned to CSC and earned his Bachelor's degree in sociology in 1968 and then started his career in education teaching black history at Butte College. He was the first black instructor hired at the college. He had one rule when teaching a class – "When one person is talking, you have to listen, and if you can't listen, you have to leave." He enforced it and it worked.

From 1967-1970, he was the Director of The Educational Opportunity Program at CSC and then went on to graduate school at Sonoma State College where he received his Master's degree in psychology in 1970.

John was then hired at Monterey Peninsula College and served as Director of Special Services, Associate Dean of Student Personnel and Special Services, and Affirmative Action Officer. He worked in this position for fifteen years. In 1985, he became Dean of Students at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo and held that position for four years. In 1989, he was appointed Associate Vice President for Student Services at California State University, Hayward (CSUH) and then to Vice President, Division of Student Affairs, at CSUH. During this time of rising through the employment ranks, John Henry found time to earn his Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) at Union Institute and University, Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1973.

After working seven years at CSUH, John Henry formally retired in 1996. Not being one to rest on his laurels, he went into management consulting for eight years. In addition to senior level administration, employment history included considerable experience in teaching, community outreach, program design, planning, outcome assessment, creation and management of diversity programs and the securing of federal and foundation grants

Throughout his career, John Henry has served on numerous boards, including the California Children's Home Society, the Butte Community Black Caucus, President of the Monterey Peninsula YMCA, President of the Board of Directors of Monterey Cultural Arts Council, and the Oroville Salvation Army Board of Advisors. In addition to the above, he has conducted numerous seminars, presentations, and workshops throughout the state on various aspects of health in the black culture in America.

John Henry is a member of the American Psychological Association, American Association of University Administrators and the National Association of Student Affairs Personnel. In 2006, he was inducted onto the Northern California Sports Association Hall of Fame.

For the past seven years, John Henry has been teaching psychology at both Yuba and Butte Community Colleges and serving his community and its youth.