



# Joseph L. Graves

GRFP Recipient: 1979

*Undergraduate Institution:*  
A.B. 1977, Oberlin College

*Graduate Institution:*  
Ph.D. 1988, Wayne State University

*Graduate Field of Study:*  
Biological Sciences

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*Current Position:*  
Associate Dean for Research and  
Professor of Biological Studies,  
Joint School for Nanoscience  
and Nanoengineering (jointly  
administered by North Carolina  
A&T and the University of  
North Carolina at Greensboro)

## RESEARCH INTERESTS //

Joseph L. Graves' research foci are on evolutionary genetics/genomics of postponed aging and biological concepts of race in humans. Graves has written two books, "The Emperor's New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium" and "The Race Myth: Why We Pretend Race Exists in America." Graves is also a strong proponent for improving the teaching of science and advocates for the teaching of evolutionary biology in public schools. He volunteers with the YMCA Chess Program to aid underserved youth in Greensboro, N.C.

## BROADER IMPACT //

My research examines the evolutionary mechanisms responsible for adaptation (or the lack thereof) in organisms. The application of evolutionary science to aging explains the origin and prevalence of complex disease. Furthermore the application of evolutionary science to human variation explains the discordance between biological and social conceptions of race. Understanding this relationship is absolutely crucial to addressing health disparities.

## A PERSONAL ANECDOTE OF THE BENEFIT FROM THE GRF PROGRAM //

I am the first person of African American descent to earn the PhD degree in Evolutionary Biology. The GRF program supported me during my time at the University of Michigan. Here I interacted with some of the greatest thinkers in evolution and ecology of the age. The impact of these individuals on my development as a scientist cannot be understated.

## A FOND MEMORY OF MY EXPERIENCE AS A FELLOW //

With due respect to the program...my fondest memory of those years was hunger. The amount of our stipends was really not enough to live on in Ann Arbor. To put things in context, the other students in the program supported by other sources weren't getting much either. So for all of us, by the last week of the month we were broke. However, we did not despair, and we supported each other. We all found a way to eat, until the next check. But in supporting each other we built strong community and friendships which lasted for life. Amazing what you can do under adversity.

## AWARDS/ HONORS //

- ABC-CLIO volume on outstanding African American scientists
- Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
- ASU-West Award for scholarly research and creative activity
- Elected to Phi Kappa Phi National Honorary Society
- Chair, External Advisory Board, National Evolutionary Synthesis Center, 2009-2012.

## POSITION PROFILE //

- 1990-1994 - Assistant Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California, Irvine
- 1994-2004 - Professor of evolutionary biology, life sciences, Arizona State University West
- 2004-2005 - Director, university core and professor of biological sciences, Fairleigh Dickinson University
- 2005-2010 - Dean, university studies and professor of biological sciences, North Carolina A&T State University
- 2007 - Member, inaugural editorial board for Evolution: Education and Outreach (published by Springer-Verlag)
- 2010-Present - Associate Dean for research and professor of biological studies, Joint School for Nanoscience and Nanoengineering

