

Dr. Lee Frank Hagan (1945-1986)

Lee F. Hagan, professor and academic administrator, was born on Saturday, July 28, 1945 in Brunswick, GA to Felton Hagan (1917-2009), apartment complex Maintenance Supervisor in Elizabeth; and Melvania Rhymes-Hagan (1918-2008), a Newark Nurse Assistant. Lee was one of four children, including Oadline Delores, Maurice Lawrence, and Jerome Anthony.

The Hagan family migrated to Newark in 1952 where Lee attended the public schools of the city—graduating from South Side High [School](#) (now Malcolm X Shabazz High [School](#)) in June 1963. During his years at South Side, Lee was a member of the Bulldogs Cross Country running team, Boys Glee Club, and the Boys Explorers Club.

Hagan earned a Bachelor and Master of Arts degree in History from Seton Hall University (1967 and 1969). His master thesis was entitled, “The Black Abolitionists: 1830-1860; their Role and Relationship with the White Abolitionists.” In 1983 Hagan received a doctorate in Social Sciences and the Humanities from Rutgers University. His dissertation, “Black Studies Programs: An Analysis of Curricula,” examined the development and changes that took place in Black Studies curriculum at four-year New Jersey institutions from their inception to 1982.

Hagan was an Instructor (1969-1976); Assistant Professor (1976-1984); and Associate Professor (1984-1986) of Black Studies, History, and Social Science courses within the History [Department](#) and Director of Afro-American [Studies](#) at Jersey City State College—now New Jersey City University ([NJCU](#)). During his seventeen NJCU years, Hagan was an advisor to numerous student organizations and belonged to the Committee on Global Studies, General Studies Curriculum Committee, Latin American Studies Program Advisory Committee, and the Executive Steering Committee for the Black Enterprise Seminar Series. In the fall of 1975, Hagan helped establish (along with Phil Littlejohn, Samuel McGhee, the John Raines, Rosetta Rutledge, Sandra Stothoff and Ann Tisdale) the Black Alumni, Administrators, Faculty, Students and Staff Organization ([BAAFSSO](#)) to improve the representation and eradicate inequities of Blacks at NJCU.

Hagan was an active member of the [Schomburg](#) Library Lecture Series Advisory Board, the [Association](#) for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, and the African Heritage Studies [Association](#) (where he became very good friends with Drs. Yosef A.A. Ben-[Jochannan](#) and Ivan G. Van [Sertima](#)). Also, Hagan was a board member and chairman of the Conference Planning Committee of the New Jersey [Association](#) of Black Educators.

In 1980, Hagan was a member of the Marion Thompson Wright study group (along with others such as Larry A. [Green](#), Clement A. [Price](#), and Giles R. [Wright](#)) which promoted the study of African American History in New Jersey and whose efforts led to the establishment in 1981 of the annual Marion Thompson Wright [Lecture](#) series—one of the nation’s longest running scholarly conference series devoted to the historical literacy of a community. Moreover, Hagan was a member of the New Jersey Historical [Society](#) and the Eastern and Weequahic Park Tennis [Association](#) (Newark, NJ).

Lee F. Hagan transitioned to join the ancestors on Thursday September 4, 1986 at St. Michael’s Medical [Center](#) in Newark due to complications from pancreatic cancer. Hagan was cremated at Rosedale Crematory.

New Jersey City University recognized Hagan’s important contribution to the institution by establishing and naming their Africana Studies [Center](#) in his honor soon after his death.

Sources: Obituary, “Lee F. Hagan, 41, college professor,” *The Star-Ledger* (Newark), 6 September 1986.