

William Harrison Pipes was born on January 3, 1912 in Inverness, Mississippi. He received a B.S. from Tuskegee Institute, an A.M. from Atlanta University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. Pipes served as president of Alcorn State University from 1945 to 1949 and academic dean of English and Speech at Philander Smith College from 1949 to 1956 prior to joining the faculty at Michigan State in 1957, where he taught speech and literature. He was the first African American in the United States to earn a Ph.D. in speech and the first to be granted full professorship at MSU. He remained at MSU until his retirement in 1975 and died on August 11, 1981.