

David W. Dickson was born in Portland, Maine. He received his bachelor's degree from Bowdoin College and master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard. In 1948, he was appointed to the English department faculty at Michigan State, becoming the first African American faculty member at the university. He taught at MSU for 15 years and was a scholar of Renaissance and biblical literature. His course on the Bible as Literature is remembered as one of the most popular offered by the department. Upon leaving MSU in 1963, Dickson held administrative posts at Northern Michigan University, Federal City College, and Stony Brook University, and became the first African American to head a New Jersey state university when he became president of Montclair State University. He died on December 10, 2003.