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William Astor Kirk, 1922-2011

Believed to be the first African American to receive a doctorate from the Department of Government, William Astor Kirk passed away last week. Kirk's dissertation, "Television Allocation Policy: An Administrative Search for the Public Interest," was written under the supervision of Emmette Redford. J. Alton Burdine Jr., O. Douglas Weeks, H. Malcolm Macdonald, Edward E. Hale and Robert H. Montgomery also served on his committee.

Kirk began teaching at Huston-Tillotson College in 1947, began doctoral studies in 1950 and earned his doctorate in 1958. Kirk wrote a memoir, "One Life: Three Professional Careers—My Civil Rights Story," about his experiences.

Below are links with more information about Dr. Kirk.

[Statesman obituary](#)

[Huston-Tillotson news release](#)

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