William H. James, the son of Richard and Phoebe James, was born on May 30, 1899, in Marion, South Carolina.

William James developed a keen interest in Mathematics and Science at an early age. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Claflin College and his Masters’ of Science degree from Boston University in Chemistry. He also studied chemistry at the University of Chicago, Clark University (Worcester), and the University of Kansas, and the University of Colorado.

His teaching career began in 1922 at Wiley College. He also served as executive secretary and instructor of science and mathematics at St. Philip’s Junior College. He started at Southern University in 1934. He was appointed head of the division of natural sciences in 1939. In 1941, when the science division became departmentalized, James was named head of the department of chemistry. He assumed the rank of full professor of chemistry in 1952.

He was an active member of the American Chemical Society, American Association of University Professor, Society of the Sigma Xi, Beta Kappa Chi Scientific Society, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, and the Royal Arch Mason (Prince Hall Affiliation). His publications included: Arithmetical and Chemical Calculations, A Manual of Elementary Quantitative Analysis, and Experimental Food Biochemistry for Students of Home Economics and Agriculture.

William James (or “Bill James”), as he was fondly known by his many friends in his 23 years of service to Southern University, has had a very beneficial effect in shaping the careers of many professional men and women who received their undergraduate training at Southern.
William H. James retired from Southern University and A&M College in May, 1957.

The William H. James Science Building [formerly Natural Science] on Southern’s campus is named in his honor.

James, William H. Personal Papers. Archives and Manuscripts Department, John B. Cade Library, Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.


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