

Abstract Submitted
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Physics at Fisk University RONALD MICKENS, Clark Atlanta University — Fisk University was chartered in 1866 to educate former slaves at the end of the civil war. The physics department was started in 1931 under the chairmanship of Dr. Elmer Imes, Fisk 1903, a research physicist in the field of infrared (IR) spectroscopy. After Imes' death in 1941, one of his early physics majors, James Lawson, became chair and soon obtained a research IR instrument from the University of Michigan. By the early 1950's Fisk's IR research findings began to be published in the scientific journals and Fisk graduate students began to read the results of their M.A. thesis at the meeting of the Southeastern Section of the American Physical Society (SESAPS). This active participation in SESAPS in the mid-1950's was the impetus which caused SESAPS to switch its meetings from segregated to unsegregated facilities. During the next four decades physics at Fisk University expanded to include the annual Fisk Infrared Institute (FIRI) and the formation of strong research collaborations with Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Vanderbilt University, Bordeaux University (France), and NASA. Our presentation will expand on these issues and also include a discussion of the "McCarthyite Problem" of the mid-fifties as it impacted both Fisk University and the physics department.

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