

APR10-2009-000779

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the APR10 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

80 Years of Physics at Fisk University

WARREN COLLINS, Fisk University

Elmer S. Imes established the physics department at Fisk University in 1929. Imes' interest in infrared spectroscopy set the direction of the department's early research, which resulted in the beginning of the graduate program and the establishment of the Fisk Molecular Spectroscopy Research Laboratory in the late 1940's, and the founding of the Fisk Infrared Institute in 1953. This research also led to important connections with Oak Ridge National Laboratory and nearby Vanderbilt University. In the 1970's, the department's major research emphasis began to shift away from traditional molecular spectroscopy toward infrared and Raman spectroscopy of solid state materials. The establishment of a NASA funded University Research Center in 1992, with continued support from NSF and other agencies, has resulted in a significant expansion in research, training and outreach activities. We review the department's history of educating and training African American students or other underrepresented groups who go on and earn advanced degrees, from the beginning of the physics major to the recently established Masters-to-PhD Bridge program.