

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Donald L. Hense

PERSON

Hense, Donald L., 1942-

Alternative Names: Donald L. Hense;

Life Dates: July 4, 1942-

Place of Birth: St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Residence: Washington, District of Columbia

Work: Washington, District of Columbia

Occupations: Nonprofit Executive

Biographical Note

Educator and businessman Donald L. Hense was born on July 4, 1942 in St. Louis, Missouri to Ivy and Fred Hense. Hense played tennis and baseball and was the Sunday school president at his church. He was president of the Junior Red Cross while in singing and acting classes at the neighborhood recreation center. Hense received his B.A. degree from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and attended graduate school at Stanford University in California. He was a Rockefeller intern in economics at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, a Merrill Scholar at the University of Ghana, a Ford Foundation Fellow at Stanford University, and a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley.

Hense served as Executive Director of the Friendship House for several years. The Friendship House is a 100 year-old social service agency that helps children, families and older adults. During his tenure, he redesigned, revitalized and created committees and an education task force to research and evaluate the issues affecting youth. Out of the education task force came the recommendation that Friendship House become a charter school. In 1998, Hense founded Friendship Public Charter Schools with the assistance of Chris Whittle, founder of the Edison School. The schools serve more than 3,900 students on four campuses from kindergarten through twelfth grade. 96% of the graduates have gone on to attend college. Hense serves as the chairman of the Center for Youth and Family Investment, an organization which provides extended learning programs to more than 2,000 children daily. Hense is also the co-founder of the Bridges to Friendship Initiative, which provided the impetus for revitalization of the Navy Yard and was recognized by Vice President Al Gore as a model community initiative. Hense has served as Vice President of the National Urban League, Director of the

Development of Children's Defense Fund, and Director of Governmental Relations at Howard University, Boston University and Dartmouth College. He also serves on the Board of the Center for Education Reform and the D.C. Arts and Humanities Collaborative and is the treasurer of the D.C. Association of Charter Schools. On June 22, 2011 Hense was honored by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) as an inductee into the National Charter Schools Hall of Fame during the General Session of the National Charter Schools Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Donald L. Hense was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 23, 2007.

Related Entries

Vashon High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Diploma

Morehouse College [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Stanford University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Lincoln School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Howard University [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to 1979]

Director of Governmental Relations

Applied Information Management [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

CEO (Founder)

Dartmouth College [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to 1986]

Director of Governmental Relations

National Urban League (NUL) [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Vice President for Development

Friendship House Association [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Program Director

Boston University [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1979 to 1981]

Director of Governmental Relations

Prairie View A&M University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1986 to ?]

Friendship Public Charter Schools [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1998 to ?]

CEO (Founder)

Bridges to Friendship Initiative [MEMBEROf]
[from 1994 to ?]

Cofounder

Center for Education Reform [MEMBEROf]
[from 1985 to ?]

Board Member

DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative [MEMBEROf]
[from 2010 to ?]

Board Member

DC Association of Chartered Public Schools (DCACPS) [MEMBEROf]
[from 2004 to ?]

Treasurer