

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Joanne Berger-Sweeney

PERSON

Berger-Sweeney, Joanne

Alternative Names: Joanne Berger-Sweeney;

Life Dates: September 21, 1958-

Place of Birth: Los Angeles, California, USA

Residence: Hartford, Connecticut

Work: Hartford, Connecticut

Occupations: University President; Neurobiologist

Biographical Note

University president and neurobiologist Joanne Berger-Sweeney was born on September 21, 1958, in Los Angeles, California, to Arminta Parks and Paul Sweeney. She received her B.A. degree in psychobiology in 1979 from Wellesley College, in Wellesley, Massachusetts, her M.P.H. degree in environmental health sciences in 1981 from the University of California, Berkeley, and her Ph.D. degree in neurotoxicology in 1989 from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, in Baltimore, Maryland.

After graduating from Wellesley College, Berger-Sweeney worked for the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and as a sanitary engineering consultant at the California Indian Legal Services and Project Leader at the California State Department of Health. After receiving her master's degree, she became an environmental scientist at Engineering Science, Inc., and an assistant resident manager at the Hackerman-Patz House for Oncology Patients and Families at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Berger-Sweeney completed her postdoctoral training at the Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM in Paris, France. In 1991, Berger-Sweeney was hired at her alma mater as the Allene Lummis Russell Professor in Neuroscience and was promoted to associate dean in 2004. From 1995 to 2004, Berger-Sweeney served as a lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. In 2010, she was appointed dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Tufts University, in Medford, Massachusetts, where she also worked as a professor of biology. In 2014, Berger-Sweeney became president of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, in 2014, where she also serves as a professor of neuroscience.

Berger-Sweeney has served on the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives board, the Behavioral Neuroscience Review Panel of the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Study Section panel, and the editorial board of Behavioral Neuroscience. Berger-Sweeney also has served as treasurer for the Society for Neuroscience and director of the Society for Neuroscience's Minority Neuroscience Fellowship Program. Berger-Sweeney currently serves on the board of trustees of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, the Henry Luce Foundation, and the Institute of International Education.

Berger-Sweeney's honors include being named a Fellow by the Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience and receiving a Lifetime Mentoring Achievement Award from the Society for Neuroscience and a National Science Foundation Young Investigator Award. She was elected as Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2012 and a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 2018. Berger-Sweeney was a recipient of the 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Connecticut NAACP.

Berger-Sweeney and her husband, Urs V. Berger, live in Hartford, Connecticut. They have two children, Clara and Tommy.

Joanne Berger-Sweeney was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 23, 2013, and _____.

Related Entries

Morningside High School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

High School Diploma

Wellesley College [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

University of California, Berkeley [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Master in Public Health

John Hopkins University Bloomberg School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

National Institute of Health (France) [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Post-Doctoral

Trinity College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 20141026 to present]

President

California Department of Health [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1990 to 1993]

Environmental Scientist

Engineering Science, Inc. (Parsons) [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1982 to 1984]

Environmental Scientist

Tufts University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2010 to 2014]

Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

Wellesley College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 199108 to 201008]

Professor of Biology and Associate Dean

American Association for the Advancement of Science [MEMBEROf]
[from 2012 to ?]

Fellow

Hartford Hospital [MEMBEROf]
[from 2014 to 2015]

Member, Board of Directors

MetroHartford Alliance [MEMBEROf]
[from 2014 to 2019]

Member, Board of Directors

Hartford Consortium for Higher Education [MEMBEROf]
[from 2014 to present]

Member, Board of Directors

Hartford Healthcare [MEMBEROf]
[from 2015 to present]

Member, Board of Directors

Capital Regional Development Authority (Connecticut) [MEMBEROf]
[from 2015 to present]

Member

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory [MEMBEROf]
[from 2016 to present]

Trustee, Board of Trustees

Connecticut State Higher Education and Entrepreneurship Working Group
[MEMBEROf]
[from 2017 to 2017]

Co-Chair

American Academy of Arts and Sciences [MEMBEROf]
[from 2018 to present]

Member

Henry Luce Foundation [MEMBEROf]
[from 20200923 to ?]

Member, Board of Directors

National Collegiate Athletic Association [MEMBEROf]
[from 2021 to ?]

Member, Division III Chancellors/Presidents Advisory Group

Institute of International Education [MEMBEROf]
[from 2021 to ?]

Member, Board of Trustees

Society for Neuroscience [MEMBEROf]
[from 1986 to ?]

Treasure/Councilor/Committee Chair

International Behavioral Neuroscience Society [MEMBEROf]
[from 2001 to 2004]

U.S. Councilor

St. Paul's Episcopal Church [MEMBEROf]
[from 2003 to ?]

Vestry Member

Framingham State University [MEMBEROf]
[from 2012 to 2012]

Board of Trustees