

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Col. Will Gunn

PERSON

Gunn, Will A. (Willie Arthur), 1958-

Alternative Names: Col. Will Gunn;

Life Dates: December 14, 1958-

Place of Birth: Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Residence: Fort Belvoir, Virginia

Work: Washington, District of Columbia

Occupations: Military Officer; Defense Lawyer

Biographical Note

U.S. Air Force Colonel Will A. Gunn was born in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in 1959. Gunn graduated with military honors with his B.S. degree in management from the United States Air Force Academy in 1980. He went on to attend Harvard Law School where he was elected president of the Harvard Law School Legal Aid Bureau and graduated cum laude with his J.D. degree in 1986. Gunn also earned his LL.M. degree in environmental law from the George Washington University School of Law. His military education included graduating from the Air Command and Staff College in 1993; the Air War College in 1999; and, Industrial College of the Armed Forces with his M.S. degree in national resource strategy in 2002.

In 1990, Gunn was appointed as a White House Fellow and Associate Director of Cabinet Affairs under President George H.W. Bush. In 2003, Gunn was named the first ever Chief Defense Counsel in the Department of Defense Office of Military Commissions. In that position, he supervised all defense activities for detainees at Guantanamo Bay prison camp selected for trial before military commissions. This was the first proceedings of this to be conducted by the United States in over sixty years. Gunn retired from the military in 2005 after more than twenty years of service and was named president and CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington where he led one of the largest affiliates of Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

In 2008, he founded the Gunn Law Firm to provide local representation to military members and veterans in a range of administrative matters. Returning to government in 2009, Gunn was appointed General Counsel in the Department of Veteran's Affairs. He has published articles in the Ohio Northern Law Review and the Air Force Law

Review. Gunn served as chairman of the American Bar Association's Commission on Youth at Risk. In addition, he served on the boards of Christian Service Charities and the Air Force Academy Way of Life Alumni Group.

Gunn has also received numerous awards and honors including the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau's Outstanding Alumni Award, the Human Rights Award from the Southern Center for Human Rights, and the American Bar Association's Outstanding Career Military Lawyer Award. In 2002, he was elected to the National Bar Association's Military Law Section Hall of Fame. Gunn's military honors include the Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters and the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

Colonel Will A. Gunn was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 21, 2013.

Related Entries

Industrial College of the Armed Forces [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.S.

George Washington University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

LL.M.

Harvard Law School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

J.D.

Air Force Institute of Technology [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 200510 to 200803]

President

Office of Military Communications, U.S. Department of Defense [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 200302 to 200507]

Chief Defense Counsel

United States Department of Veterans Affairs [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1997 to ?]

General Counsel

United States Air Force [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1982 to ?]

Executive Officer

Pope Air Force Base, United States Air Force [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 199607 to 199907]

Staff Judge Advocate

United States Air Force [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1995 to ?]

Chief Circuit Defense Counsel

Gunn Law Firm [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 200808 to 200905]

Principal

Christian Services Charities [MEMBEROf]
[from 2004 to 2009]

Board of Directors

Way of Life Alumni Group [MEMBEROf]
[from 2005 to 2009]

Board of Directors

American Bar Association (ABA) [MEMBEROf]
[from 2007 to 2009]

Chairman, Commission on Youth at Risk