

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Richard Roper

PERSON

Roper, Richard W.

Alternative Names: Richard Roper;

Life Dates: September 20, 1945-

Place of Birth: Deland, Florida, USA

Residence: Maplewood, NJ

Occupations: Government Administrator ; Academic Administrator

Biographical Note

Government and academic administrator Richard Roper was born on September 20, 1945 in Deland, Florida to Henry Roper and Dorothea Roper. He graduated from Risley High School in Brunswick, Georgia in 1963, and received his B.A. degree in economics from Rutgers University in 1968, and his M.P.A. degree in public affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs in 1971.

Roper began his career in public affairs as a legislative aide to Kenneth Gibson, Newark's first African American mayor. He then served as director of the Office of Newark Metropolitan Studies from 1974 until 1978. In 1978, Roper began serving in President Carter's administration as special assistant to Secretary of Commerce Juanita Kreps, a position he held until 1980. He then returned to Princeton University in 1980, to serve as a staff member of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. While at Princeton, he also served as assistant dean for Graduate Career Services and Government Relations, director of the Program for New Jersey Affairs, executive director of the Council on New Jersey Affairs, and as a lecturer. Roper then became the director of the Port Authority's Office of Economic and Policy Analysis, followed by a position as director of the agency's Office of Business and Job Opportunity. In 1998, Roper consulted as staff director of the Newark in the 21st Century Task Force. He then served as interim director of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice in 2006 and returned to the Port Authority the following year. Roper retired from the Port Authority as director of the Planning Department in 2010.

Roper served on the board of directors for Brick City Development Corporation, New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute, La Casa de Don Pedro, and Bethany Cares Incorporated. Roper has also served as a member of the Rutgers University Board of

Governors, and on the board of trustees for The Fund for New Jersey, on the board of deacons for Bethany Baptist Church, and on the New Jersey Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct.

He has received numerous awards for his work, including the Leadership and Community Service Award from the Oranges and Maplewood unit of the NAACP, the Edward P. Bullard Distinguished Alumnus Award from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice Award, and the Leadership Newark's Founders Award.

Roper and his wife, Marlene Roper, have two sons, Jelani and Akil.

Richard Roper was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 29, 2017.

Related Entries

West Virginia State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Rutgers University-Newark [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Princeton University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.P.A.