

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Leslie A. Morris

PERSON

Morris, Leslie A., 1953-

Alternative Names: Leslie A. Morris;

Life Dates: April 30, 1953-

Place of Birth: Long Branch, New Jersey, USA

Work: Westampton, NJ

Occupations: Healthcare Administrator; Nonprofit Executive

Biographical Note

Healthcare administrator and non-profit executive Leslie A. Morris was born on April 30, 1953 in Long Branch, New Jersey to Christine Newsom Morris and Nathaniel Morris. She graduated from Long Branch High School in 1971, and received her B.A. degree in sociology at Simmons College in 1975. Morris went on to earn her M.S.W. degree in clinical social work at Boston College in 1977, and her M.P.H. degree in public health with an emphasis on maternal and child health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Morris served as a social worker in various clinical facilities in Boston, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland; and Washington, D.C. before becoming the director of the first comprehensive school-based health center in New Jersey at Snyder High School in Jersey City, New Jersey in 1987. There, she established programs targeting high risk youth in the areas of reproductive health care, mental health counseling, and health education.. After twelve years in Jersey City, Morris went on to serve as the director of the School Health Initiative at the National Association of Community Health Centers in Washington, D.C. For five years, she provided training, technical assistance, consultation, and resources to the nation's network of community health centers on the development of school-based health centers for high risk youth. She also re-developed five school-based health centers in Newark, New Jersey. In 2006, she was named director of community relations at the New Jersey Primary Care Association in Princeton, New Jersey, where she oversaw statewide public relations and marketing activities, provided technical assistance to community health centers, and advocated on behalf of the health centers and their patients. She also served as an adjunct professor at Burlington County College in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, and Camden County College in Blackwood, New Jersey.

In 2007, Morris was inspired by Sylvester Monroe's book, *Brothers*, to self-publish her own autobiography entitled *How Ya Like Me Now!*, which chronicled her childhood and adolescent experiences in public housing in Long Branch, New Jersey. In 2014, Morris founded Women of the Dream, a non-profit organization committed to mentoring girls and young women in Camden, NJ and other underserved areas.

Leslie A. Morris was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 27, 2018.

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