

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Topper Carew

PERSON

Carew, Topper, 1943-

Alternative Names: Topper Carew;

Life Dates: July 16, 1943-

Place of Birth: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Residence: Cambridge, MA

Occupations: Film Director

Biographical Note

Film director Topper Carew was born on July 16, 1943 in Boston, Massachusetts. Carew attended Howard University School of Architecture in Washington, D.C. and received his B.A. degree in architecture and his M.S. degree in environmental design from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Later, Carew obtained his Ph.D. degree in communications from the Union Graduate School and Institute for Policy Studies.

In 1966, Carew founded The New Thing Art and Architecture Center, in Washington, D.C., to teach inner city youth. In 1972, Carew transitioned into film and received the Community Fellowship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and, in 1973, went to work at WGBH in Boston where he produced Say Brother, Tonite From Harvard Square and several national PBS series including Say Brother, National Edition, and Rebop I & II. Carew received a broadcast fellowship from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and spent four years there. Carew and his late wife, producer Alyce S. Carew, co-founded the non-profit Rainbow Television Workshop, in 1974. Included in his filmography are credits for his work, as director for Breakin' N' Enterin' in 1983; storywriter and producer for the theatrical release of D.C. Cab in 1983; producer of Be Somebody or Be Somebody's Fool in 1984; producer of And The Children Shall Lead TV movie in 1985; executive producer of Bustin' Loose TV series in 1987; executive producer of A Little Bit Strange the TV movie in 1989; executive producer of Homeroom TV series in 1989; director and screenwriter for Talkin Dirty After Dark in 1991; executive producer of Martin from 1992 to 1997; director of The Journey of Allen Strange TV series in 1998; director of The Jersey TV Series in 2000; director of The 100 Deeds of Eddie Mc Dowd in 2001; director of We Don't Die, We Multiply: The Robin Harris Story in 2006.

In 2012, Carew was appointed as a research scholar at Life Long Kindergarten Lab at the MIT Media Lab; and, in 2016, he was promoted to principal investigator at the MIT Media Lab. He later launched the Techquity Research Group and was named faculty fellow at the Innovation Lab at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia in 2018.

His honors include the Boston Neighborhood Network's "National Media Hero Award"; the national "Hometown Video Award" for the best Public Access Television "On Air" promotional campaign; and a 2013 MIT Martin Luther King Leadership Award. He was the keynote speaker at Boston's 2015 King Breakfast and at Boston's 2016 Annual King Afternoon Celebration at Faneuil Hall.

Carew served on the advisory board for The Color of STEM. Carew has won more than forty film and television awards, and eight Gold Medals for graphic design. His awards also include three Action for Children's Television Awards, four NAACP Image Awards, a People's Choice Award, and a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award.

Topper Carew was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 14, 2018.

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