

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Donald J. Jackson

PERSON

Jackson, Donald J., 1943-

Alternative Names: Donald J. Jackson; Don Jackson

Life Dates: September 18, 1943-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Work: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Media Company Entrepreneur

Biographical Note

Donald J. Jackson was born on September 18, 1943 in Chicago, Illinois to Lillian Peachy and John Wesley Jackson. As founder and CEO of Central City Productions, Jackson has dedicated his life to filling the gap left by mainstream media. For more than 30 years, he has produced and marketed quality television shows that emphasize African American culture.

Jackson graduated from Marshall High School in 1961, where he played basketball on a championship team and earned a basketball scholarship to Northwestern University. He was captain of the basketball team and graduated in 1965 with a B.S. in radio, TV and film. Jackson began working in advertising for RR Donnelley as an account executive. Then, in 1967, Chicago radio station WVON hired him as the sales manager.

In 1970, Jackson founded Central City Marketing to market, promote and produce African American media. Central City Productions (CCP) grew out of Central City Marketing in 1978 and started producing and syndicating television programs and managing advertising sales with Jackson at the helm. The programs include: The Bud Billiken Back-to-School Parade, the first and only televised black parade; MBR: Minority Business Report, the first nationally syndicated business show highlighting minorities; The Stellar Gospel Music Awards, which Jackson began in 1985; and Know Your Heritage, the first televised quiz show featuring African American students.

Jackson is Chairman of the Board of the DuSable Museum of African American History and has served as a board member of the Chicago Transit Authority, Columbia College Chicago, Gateway Foundation and Junior Achievement of Chicago. He helped

to found the Alliance of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs (A.B.L.E.). Jackson and his wife, Rosemary, have two children and a grandson.

Related Entries

John Marshall Metropolitan High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

St. James Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Northwestern University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Our Lady of Sorrows [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

St Malachy Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

R.H. Donnelley [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1965 to ?]

Account Executive

WVON Radio [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1967 to ?]

Sales Manager

Central City Marketing [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1970 to ?]

Founder

Central City Productions [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1978 to ?]

Founder