

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Precious Lashley

PERSON

Lashley, Precious, 1926-2008

Alternative Names: Precious Lashley;

Life Dates: October 16, 1926-October 14, 2008

Place of Birth: Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Residence: Chicago, Illinois

Occupations: Fashion Designer

Biographical Note

Award-winning fashion designer, manufacturer and teacher Precious Lashley set trends for women of style for more than forty years. A graduate of Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, Lashley began her career as a couture designer for private clients in the early 1950s. She went on to study design and manufacturing at Ray-Vogue College of Design in the early 1970s before founding Lynn Stuart's School of Dressmaking, which she named for her three children, Meryl Lynn, Iris Lynn and Robert Stuart. By 1973, Lashley was designing under her Lynn Stuart's label and producing annual fashion shows to showcase her designs as well as those of her students.

In 1978, after receiving a first place design award from the New York Couture Club, Lashley founded Precious, Inc., featuring ready-to-wear women's apparel. She presented her first collection under the Precious! label to upscale retailers at the Chicago Apparel Center. Marshall Field's, Carson Pirie Scott, Joseph Shoe Salon and J.C. Penney all carried the Precious! styles.

By the mid-1980s, Precious designs were a routine feature in Fairchild Publications' fashion trade paper, Women's Wear Daily, Vogue and Ebony, as well as local press, including The Chicago Tribune, The Chicago Sun-Times and The Defender. Lashley received honors for excellence in design from many organizations, including Provident Medical Center, Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center, Independence Bank, Robeson's of Champaign, Hadassah, South Suburban Chicago Links and Ebony Fashion Fair. Lashley retired in the early 1990s and occasionally taught design workshops at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Lashley passed away on October 14, 2008.

Lashley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 16, 2002.

Related Entries

Washington Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

A.H. Parker High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Tuskegee University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Illinois Institute of Art [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Illinois, Chicago [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1979]

Instructor

Mid-City Uniform Cap Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

United States Postal Service [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Lynn Stuart's School of Dressmaking [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1973 to ?]

Founder

Precious, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1978 to ?]

Founder