

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ronald Davenport

PERSON

Davenport, Ronald R.

**Alternative Names:** Ronald Davenport; Ronald R. Davenport, Sr.

**Life Dates:** May 21, 1936-

**Place of Birth:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

**Residence:** Pittsburgh, PA

**Occupations:** Radio Station Owner; Law School Dean

## Biographical Note

Businessman and lawyer Ronald Davenport, Sr., was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 21, 1936. After earning his B.S. degree in economics from Pennsylvania State University in 1958, Davenport went to law school; earning his LL.B. degree from Temple University in 1962, he went to Yale Law School for his LL.M. degree in 1963.

Davenport started his career as a professor of law at Duquesne University in 1963, where he remained for twenty years. When he took over as dean of the law school in 1970, Davenport became the first black man to be dean of a predominantly white school. In 1982, Davenport became a partner at Buchanan Ingersoll Professional Corporation, and a fellow of the U.S. State Department, reviewing legal systems in South and East Asia. Davenport also served as a consultant to the Constitutional Convention Preparatory Committee of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention. Not content with simply the practice of law, in 1972, Davenport became chairman of Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation, a group he and his wife formed from the purchase of four radio stations. By 1976, Sheridan Broadcasting owned half of the Mutual Black Network, later completing the buyout. Sheridan Broadcasting was heard through more than three hundred radio affiliates across the country; he also served as the co-chairman of the American Urban Radio Networks.

Beyond his endeavors in the practice of law and broadcasting, Davenport gave his time to a wide variety of other organizations. Davenport served on the board of Colgate University; was chairman of the Visiting Committee of African American Studies at Harvard; and served on the board of Aramark. Davenport was awarded numerous honorary degrees; the Man of the Year Award from the Masons; and participated in several conferences with U.S. presidents.

Davenport and his wife, Judith Marylyn, raised three children.

## Related Entries

**Spring Garden Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Stoddart-Fleisher Middle School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**West Philadelphia High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Diploma**

**Pennsylvania State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**Temple University Beasley School of Law** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**LLB**

**Spring Garden School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Duquesne University School of Law** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1963 to ?]

**Professor**

**Duquesne University School of Law** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to ?]

**Dean**

**Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1972 to ?]

**Chairman**

**Buchanan Ingersoll Professional Corporation** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1982 to ?]

**Partner**