

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Floretta Dukes McKenzie

PERSON

McKenzie, Floretta Dukes

Alternative Names: Floretta Dukes McKenzie;

Life Dates: August 19, 1935-March 23, 2015

Place of Birth: Lakeland, Florida, USA

Residence: Bethesda, MD

Work: Washington, D.C.

Occupations: School Superintendent; Education Consultant

Biographical Note

Floretta McKenzie has a distinguished record of more than forty years of service to education as both a school administrator and educational consultant. Born in Lakeland, Florida, on August 19, 1935, she went on to earn her B.A. degree from D.C. Teachers College in 1956 and her M.Ed. degree from Howard University in 1957 before beginning her career as a teacher in Maryland. McKenzie later rose through the Washington, D.C., school system and became deputy superintendent in 1973. In 1974, she returned to Maryland and was hired as area assistant superintendent for Montgomery County Public Schools. McKenzie worked for the U.S. Department of Education as a deputy assistant secretary in the Office of School Improvement, managing fifteen federal education discretionary programs and initiatives. She also served as the U.S. delegate to the UNESCO General Conference in Yugoslavia.

In 1981, McKenzie returned to D.C. Public Schools as the superintendent of schools and chief state school officer. In this capacity, she oversaw the country's twenty-first-largest school system, managing 89,000 students, 13,000 employees and a \$400 million budget. Under her leadership, the district established several public and private partnerships to improve instructional programs and district management. McKenzie also oversaw the implementation of the Five-Year Computer Literacy Plan, one of the country's first long-range programs for integrating technology into the public school curriculum.

McKenzie left her position in 1988 to form her own company, The McKenzie Group, an educational consulting firm. She served as its first president until 1997, when she became the company's chairperson. The McKenzie Group specializes in educational

management and planning.

McKenzie served on several boards of directors, including the National Geographic Society, Marriott International, the White House Historical Association, Howard University and the Johns Hopkins Leadership Development Program. She also lectured in the American University's Graduate School of Education.

Floretta McKenzie passed away on March 23, 2015 at the age of 79.

Related Entries

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Howard University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.A.

University of the District of Columbia [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

District of Columbia Public Schools [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1970 to 1985]

Teacher

Montgomery County Public Schools [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1995 to 2012]

Area Assistant Superintendent

United States Department of Education [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of School Improvement

District of Columbia Public Schools [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2002 to ?]

Superintendent of Schools and Chief State School Officer

McKenzie Group [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1988 to ?]

Founder