

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Francis Ward

PERSON

Ward, Francis, 1935-

Alternative Names: Francis Ward;

Life Dates: August 11, 1935-

Place of Birth: Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Residence: Orlando, Florida

Occupations: Newspaper Correspondent;

Biographical Note

Usher Francis Ward was born in Atlanta, Georgia on August 11, 1935. After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School in 1953, Ward attended Morehouse College, earning his B.A. in English in 1958. From there, he attended Syracuse University, earning his master's in journalism in 1961.

While attending Morehouse, Ward took a job at the Atlanta Daily World as a janitor, and after his graduation, he spent several months working as a proofreader and wrote a few articles. In 1964, Ward met Bob Johnson, and was hired by Jet magazine. In 1967, he was promoted to Ebony, and the following year he made the move to the Chicago Sun-Times. There, he covered the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the aftermath, as well as writing a tribute to Gwendolyn Brooks. In 1970, Ward became the Chicago correspondent for the L.A. Times, where he remained until 1978. That year, he joined the staff of the Miami Herald, and in 1980, he joined WHUT-TV at Howard University. In 1984, Ward joined the mayor's press corps in Chicago as an assistant press secretary, and he remained there until 1989, working through the administrations of Harold Washington and Eugene Sawyer. After a brief teaching stint at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, he was hired by the Newhouse School of Journalism at his alma mater of Syracuse University in 1990. He remains there today.

Ward has always felt that journalism is a public service, and he has often spoken out on media responsibility. He and his wife, actress Val Gray Ward, live in New York.

Related Entries

Booker T. Washington High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

E. R. Carter Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Morehouse College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Syracuse University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.A.

Atlanta Daily World [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1977]

Janitor, Proofreader/Reporter

Jet Magazine [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to ?]

Reporter

Ebony Magazine [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1986 to 1986]

Reporter

Chicago Sun-Times [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1968 to 1969]

Reporter

L.A. Times [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1984]

Chicago Correspondent

Miami Herald [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1987 to 1992]

Staff Reporter

WHUT TV [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1980 to 1984]

City of Chicago [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1984 to 1989]

Assistant Press Secretary

Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1989 to 1990]

Professor

S.I. Newhouse School of Journalism at Syracuse University [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1990 to ?]

Professor

National Association for Black Journalists [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]