

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Gerard Peterson

PERSON

Peterson, Gerard, 1932-

Alternative Names: Gerard Peterson;

Life Dates: September 10, 1932-

Place of Birth: Hartford, Connecticut, USA

Residence: Oak Bluffs, MA

Work: Oak Bluffs, MA

Occupations: Corporate Executive; Insurance
Executive

Biographical Note

Gerard M. Peterson was born on September 10, 1932, in Hartford, Connecticut; he was the second of five children born to Edythe and Rufus Peterson. Peterson attended Hartford public schools, and graduated from Bulkeley High School. From there, Peterson received a B.A. degree in economics from the University of Connecticut.

With Aetna Life and Casualty, Peterson's first position was administrator of Aetna's Corporate Insurance Division as an assistant secretary at the corporate level, directing sales for field office group insurance representatives. Active in Aetna's commitment to corporate involvement, Peterson was a loaned executive to non-profit organizations. From 1965 to 1966, Peterson then was manager of Plans for Progress, one of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs. Between 1969 and 1970, Peterson was again on loan as the executive vice-president of the National Alliance of Business, which was created to find jobs for the unemployed. In July 1970, Peterson left Aetna to become assistant dean in the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University in California, where he served for three years.

Peterson returned to Aetna in 1973 to become the marketing director of Aetna Public Health Management's Health Maintenance Organization (HMO). From 1975 to 1983, Peterson, as Aetna's Marketing Manager, directed sales representatives and managed national advertising and marketing services. Peterson completed his distinguished twenty-three year career with Aetna Life and Casualty in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1983.

After leaving Aetna, Peterson served as executive director and CEO of the Hartford Civic Center; this multi-purpose facility had a convention venue and one of the largest arenas in New England. During his tenure at the Hartford Civic Center, 18.5 million customers visited the Center while contributing a surplus exceeding \$11,000,000 to the City of Hartford. The Hartford Civic Center received the 1986 Arena of the Year Award from Performance Magazine while Peterson himself was recognized as Facility Manager of the Year for major convention centers.

Peterson's contributions to national, regional and local organizations included being director of the Hartford

Chamber of Commerce, a council member in the town of Bloomfield, Connecticut, and serving on committees of the United States Golf Association (USGA).

Related Entries

Bulkeley High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Connecticut [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Naylor School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Burr School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Hartford Civic Center; XL Center [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Executive Director

Aetna, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Plans for Progress [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

U.S. Government's taksforce on Youth Motivation
[EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Administrator

Stanford University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1969 to ?]

Assistant Dean

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

President

WHUS Radio [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Announcer