

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Reverend Dr. Suzan Johnson Cook

PERSON

Johnson Cook, Suzan D. (Suzan Denise), 1957-

Alternative Names: The Honorable Reverend Dr. Suzan Johnson Cook;

Life Dates: January 28, 1957-

Place of Birth: New York, New York, USA

Residence: Sag Harbor, NY

Occupations: Pastor

Biographical Note

Religious leader and corporate entrepreneur Suzan Johnson Cook was born January 28, 1957, in New York City. Her mother was a schoolteacher and her father, a trolley car driver. They founded a security guard business that moved the family from a Harlem, New York, tenement to a home in the Gunn Hill section of the Bronx, New York. Cook was one of the few African American children to attend the Riverdale Country Day School in the Bronx, and her parents helped to organize an African American Parent Teachers Association. Cook studied acting and singing at Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts, where she received her B.S. degree. She has also received her M.A. degree in education from Columbia University, her M.Div. degree from Union Theological Seminary and her D.Min. degree from Ohio's United Theological Seminary. She is also a graduate of Harvard University's President's Administrative Fellows Program.

In 1983, Cook was appointed pastor of the Mariner's Temple Baptist Church in lower Manhattan, becoming the first African American woman to be named pastor by the American Baptist Association in its two hundred year history. At Mariner's Temple, she inaugurated the Wednesday Lunch Hour of Power. After thirteen years of service, in 1996, she became the founder and senior pastor of the Bronx Fellowship Christian Church. In 1990, David Dinkins appointed Cook as the first woman chaplain to the New York Police Department. She was also the first woman to be elected president of the Hampton University Minister's Conference.

Cook served on the Domestic Policy Council in the White House in 1993, and with HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros as a consultant on Faith Initiatives from 1994 to 1997.

Then, she became the co-founder and chief operating officer of JONCO Productions, Inc., a sales, management, and diversity firm which hosts a speaker's bureau and media/book distributions. She is the author of several books including the best seller, Too Blessed To Be Stressed, released in 2002.

In 1997, Ebony magazine named Cook one of the top fifteen women in ministry in the nation, and in 2000, she was named one of New York's top five preachers. Cook lives in New York City with her husband, Ronald and their two sons, Samuel David and Christopher Daniel.

Related Entries

Riverdale Country School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

P.S. 78 [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Columbia University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.Ed.

Emerson College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

WJLA-TV [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1978 to 1980]

Floor Director

WPLG-TV [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1981 to 1982]

Producer of Public Affairs

Mariner's Temple [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1983 to 1996]

Senior Pastor

White House [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1993 to 1994]

White House Fellow

Bronx Christian Fellowship Baptist Church [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1996 to 2010]

Pastor

White House [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2011 to 2013]

United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom

Delta Sigma Theta [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Honorary Member

Hampton University Ministers' Conference [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

President

Harvard University [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Administrative Fellow