

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Elyse White

PERSON

White, Elyse, 1908-2008

Alternative Names: Elyse White;

Life Dates: October 1, 1908-May 4, 2008

Place of Birth: Roanoke, Virginia, USA

Residence: New York, New York

Occupations: Travel Agent;

Biographical Note

Medical social worker and travel agent Elyse White was born on October 1, 1908 in Roanoke, Virginia to Julia Johnson, a school teacher, and William D. Woods, a minister. Graduating from Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. in 1926, White graduated with her B.A. degree from Howard University in 1930. In 1942, White received her post graduate degree from Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

White went on to become a social investigator for the New York City Department of Welfare. In 1950, White began working as a medical social worker at Fordham Hospital in New York. Continuing her education, White received a degree from the New School of Social Research in New York in 1952, and then worked at Lincoln Hospital until 1965. White then took a job with the New York Board of Education as an attendance teacher.

In 1970, White started a third career as a travel agent, and in 1973, she and her sister embarked on a thirty day trip around the world, visiting Europe, Turkey, Israel, India, Japan and Hawaii. Her main love, however, has always been Africa. In 1975, White became a founding member of the African Travel Association (ATA) and began organizing and leading tourist expeditions to Africa. Over the next thirty years, White (who traveled to twenty-five African nations and over eighty countries around the world) made it possible for countless Americans to visit Africa and understand African culture. In 1998, the government of Ghana “enstooled” her as an Ashante Queen Mother for her dedication and promotion of the African continent.

White passed away on May 4, 2008 at the age of 99.

White was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 22, 2007.

Related Entries

Lucretia Mott Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

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

Howard University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Catholic University of America [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

New School for Social Research [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

African Travel Association (ATA) [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Founder, Director, Member

Fordham Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1950 to 1960]

Medical Social Worker

Lincoln Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1950 to 1960]

Medical Social Worker

New York City Board of Education [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1960 to 1969]

Attendance Teacher

New York City Department of Welfare [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1930 to ?]

Social Investigator

Alpha Kappa Alpha [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Howard University Alumni Club of New York City [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

President

Big Apple Greeter Hospitality [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member, Tour Guide