

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Donna M. Mendes

PERSON

Mendes, Donna , 1951-

Alternative Names: Mendes, Donna , 1951-; Donna M. Mendes

Life Dates: October 25, 1951-

Place of Birth: Oceanside, New York

Residence: New York, NY

Occupations: Medical Professor; Vascular Surgeon

Biographical Note

Medical professor and vascular surgeon Dr. Donna M. Mendes was born to Benjamin and Bernice Mendes on October 25, 1951. The second of three children raised in Oceanside, New York, Mendes attended Hofstra University in New York in 1969. With the help of her parents and Hofstra University counselor, Beatryce Nivens, Mendes became a pre-med major and graduated from Hofstra University in 1973 with her B.A. in biology.

In 1973, Mendes enrolled in Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. Mendes chose to study peripheral vascular surgery, which is the treatment of the vessels that branch out of the heart. Mendes graduated the following year and became an intern at St. Luke's Hospital and a visiting clinical fellow at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. She became a resident at St. Luke's in 1978, and a surgical resident two years later.

In 1981, Mendes was promoted to surgical chief resident at St. Luke's Hospital, and served as a fellow in vascular surgery at Englewood Hospital in 1982. After completing her vascular surgery fellowship, Mendes returned to St. Luke's Hospital and became an instructor in clinical surgery at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons.

In 1986, Mendes married her husband, Ronald LaMotte, and became the first African American female vascular surgeon certified by the American Board of Surgery. Mendes' clinical research has focused on the effects of race on vascular disease, and she seeks to discover why peripheral arterial disease (blockages of blood vessels away from the heart) seems to impact African American patients

more frequently, and with greater severity.

In 1990, Mendes became assistant clinical professor of surgery at Columbia University. She was hired as the chief of St. Luke's Hospital's Division of Vascular Surgery in 1993. Five years later, Mendes had become the senior attending surgeon in the Department of Surgery at St. Luke's, and was hired as the attending vascular surgeon at the Department of Surgery Lenox Hill Hospital in 1999.

Mendes lives in Englewood, New Jersey, with her husband.

Donna M. Mendes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 28, 2007.

Related Entries

Mendes, Benjamin [CHILD_OF]
Father

Mendes, Bernice [CHILD_OF]
Mother

LaMotte, Ronald [SPOUSE_OF]
Husband

Smith, Henrietha []
Grandmother

Bennet, Theodore []
Grandfather

Hofstra University [STUDENT_OF]
[from ? to 1973]

Bachelors

Columbia University [STUDENT_OF]
[from ? to 1974]

M.D.

Self Employed [EMPLOYEE_OF]
[from 1984 to 2003]

Doctor

Columbia University [EMPLOYEE_OF]
[from 1990 to ?]

Assistant clinical professor of surgery

St. Luke's Hospital [EMPLOYEE_OF]
[from 1993 to ?]

Chief of the Division of Vascular Surgery

Lenox Hill Hospital [EMPLOYEE_OF]
[from 1999 to ?]

Vascular Surgeon

Association of Black Cardiologists [MEMBER_OF]

Member