

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Curtis Symonds

PERSON

Symonds, Curtis, 1955-

Alternative Names: Curtis Symonds;

Life Dates: August 12, 1955-

Place of Birth: Bermuda, Bermuda

Residence: Fairfax, VA

Occupations: Broadcast Executive; Sports Executive

Biographical Note

Corporate executive Curtis Symonds was born on August 12, 1955 in Bermuda to Barbara and Norman Symonds. His family moved to Wilberforce, Ohio when he was two years old. Symonds attended the local Xenia High School, graduating in 1973, and he went on to receive his B.S. degree from Central State University in 1978.

Upon graduation from college, Symonds began working for Continental Cablevision in Ohio in 1979

as system manager. In 1983, he moved to Chicago, Illinois to work for ESPN as a local advertising sales consultant. He was later promoted to Director of Affiliate Marketing for the Midwest region. Symonds remained at ESPN for five years before joining Black Entertainment Television (BET) in 1988 as Executive Vice President of Affiliate Sales and Affiliate Marketing. In 1992, Symonds became President and Chief Operating Officer of BET Action Pay-Per-View and BET International. Symonds served as Executive Vice President of BET on Jazz in 1996 and remained in that position until his retirement in 2001. During his tenure, he helped BET build its subscriber base from 18.8 million to 65 million homes.

In 2005, Sheila C. Johnson, President of the Washington Mystics, a professional women's basketball team in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), appointed Symonds Chief Operating Officer of the Washington Mystics. He is responsible for the organization's day-to-day operations. In 2006, Symonds opened a privately funded indoor basketball facility called Hoop Magic in Chantilly, Virginia.

Symonds has also served as the President of the T. Howard Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to promoting women and people of color in entertainment and multimedia platforms. He is a recipient of the 1998 National Cable Television Association (NCTA) Vanguard Award for marketing excellence, the highest award for marketing in the cable industry.

Symonds resides in McLean, Virginia with his wife, Pat, and their three children.

Symonds was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 23, 2007.

Related Entries

Saint Joseph College [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Xenia High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Cook Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Central State University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Warner Middle School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Paxton's Sporting Goods [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Manager

Time Warner Cable [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Laborer

Continental Cablevision, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Regional Marketing Assistant

Satellite News Channel [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Entertainment and Sports Programming Networks

[EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Ad Sales Consultant

Black Entertainment Television [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Executive Vice President

Symonds Synergy Group [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Founder and President

T. Howard Foundation [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

President

Washington Mystics [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Chief Operating Officer