

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Karen Hastie Williams

PERSON

Williams, Karen Hastie, 1944-

**Alternative Names:** Karen Hastie Williams;

**Life Dates:** September 30, 1944-July 7, 2021

**Place of Birth:** Washington, District of Columbia, USA

**Work:** Washington, D.C.

**Occupations:** Corporate Lawyer

## Biographical Note

Karen Hastie Williams was born on September 30, 1944 in Washington, D.C. to Beryl and William H. Hastie, Jr. Her father was the first African American federal judge appointed to the bench of the Federal District Court in the U.S. Virgin Islands and became the first African American Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1946. In 1949, he was appointed to the Third United States Circuit Court of Appeals, where he would serve for twenty-one years. Judge William H. Hastie along with Charles Hamilton Houston, Thurgood Marshall, and others worked on the cases that led to the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision.

Williams graduated from Girls' High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received her B.A. degree from Bates College in 1966 and her M.A. degree from Tufts University in 1967. In 1973, she received her J.D. degree from Catholic University of America. She was then hired as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and Judge Spottswood W. Robinson, III of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Williams served as Chief Counsel of the Senate Committee on the Budget from 1977 until 1980. She also served as Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy. In 1982, she was the first African American to joined Crowell & Moring LLP, where she made partner in two years. As a retired partner, she has taken on a new area of expertise, seeking compensation for victims of terrorism.

From 1992 to 1993, Williams served as Chair of the ABA Section of Public Contract Law and became Director of Washington Gas & Light. Williams was appointed by President George W. Bush and served with distinction as a Public Life Member of the Internal Revenue Oversight Board from 2000 to 2003 and was Chair of the Red Cross

Governance Advisory Committee.

Williams is a member of the National Contract Management Association, the Black Women Lawyers Association, the National Bar Association and the Women's Forum of Washington, D.C. Her community activities include service on the Board of Directors of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights under the Law. She is a member of the Board of Trustees for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund at Amherst College and formerly of the National Cathedral School.

Williams was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 27, 2007.

Williams passed away on July 7, 2021.

## Related Entries

**Philadelphia High School for Girls** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Ellwood Sch** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Saints Peter and Paul School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Columbus Law School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Wagner Gen Louis Ms** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Philadelphia High School for Girls** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Bates College** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Crowell and Moring LLP** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Partner**

**Mobil Oil Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Public Relations**

**Thurgood Marshall** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Clerk**

**Spottswood W. Robinson III** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Clerk**

**Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver and Jacobson LLP** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Lawyer**

**U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**General Counsel**

**Office of Management and Budget** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Continental Airlines** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board**

**Chubb Limited** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board**

**Gannett Co., Inc.** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board**

**SunTrust Banks, Inc.** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board**

**WGL Holdings, Inc.** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board**

**NAACP Legal Defense Fund** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Chair**

**BOLD Initiative** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**American Red Cross** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

