

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Shawna Nesbitt

PERSON

Nesbitt, Shawna , 1963-

Alternative Names: Nesbitt, Shawna , 1963-

Life Dates: November 10, 1963-

Place of Birth: Aliquippa, Pennsylvania

Residence: Irving, TX

Occupations: Cardiovascular Physician; Medical Scientist

Biographical Note

Cardiovascular physician and medical scientist Dr. Shawna Nesbitt was born on November 10, 1963 in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. Nesbitt attended Quigley Catholic High School in Baden, Pennsylvania where she graduated in 1981. She went on to be the first black student to complete the three year pre-med program at Gannon University and go to Hahnemann School of Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was the first black to enter the Hahnemann program, where she earned her M.D. degree in 1988. During Nesbitt's residency in internal medicine at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh, Nesbitt was inspired by Dr. James Ferraro to follow her passion for research in the area of hypertension. In 1991, she became a fellow at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan and worked on several clinical trials with her colleague Dr. Kenneth Jamerson, notably the Tecumseh Blood Pressure Study, the "Losartan Interventions for Endpoints in Hypertension Study" ("LIFE" Study), and the "African American Study of Kidney Disease and Hypertension Study" ("ASKD" Study). She went to work as an investigator for various firms, performing research on African Americans with hypertension and renal disease. She met her husband, Thomas Nesbitt, in 1992 and they married in 1995.

Nesbitt moved to Dallas, Texas in 2001 after she completed her M.S. degree in clinical research design to work at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. As an associate professor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, she worked on several projects such as the Reynolds Foundation's "Dallas Heart Study" on the "Trial of Preventing Hypertension" or "TROPHY" study funded by the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca . The TROPHY study successfully showed her team's hypothesis was correct and the results were published in the 'New England Journal.' She initiated the trial of preventing hypertension in patients with high blood pressure. In addition, she worked as a manuscript reviewer for the American Journal of Hypertension and the Journal of Ethnicity and Disease.

Nesbitt has received medical licensure in the states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Texas. She has been honored by the American Heart Association for her work on cardiovascular epidemiology and high blood pressure. Nesbitt has served on several boards and panels including the American College of Physicians, the American Heart Association, the American Society of Hypertension, the Association of Black Cardiologists, the National Medical Association, the International Society of Hypertension in Blacks, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Dr. Shawna Nesbitt was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 13, 2008.

Related Entries

Sarvis, Thelma [GRANDCHILD_{OF}]
Maternal Grandmother

Lewis, Marzella [GREAT GRANDCHILD_{OF}]
Great-grandmother

Lewis, Starki [GREAT GRANDCHILD_{OF}]
Great-grandfather

Nesbitt, Thomas [SPOUSE_{OF}]
Husband

Smith, Eddie [GRANDCHILD_{OF}]
Paternal Grandmother

Smith, Willie T. [GRANDCHILD_{OF}]
Paternal Grandfather

Sarvis, Willie John [GRANDCHILD_{OF}]
Maternal Grandfather

Smith Jr., Townsend [CHILD_OF]

Father

Nesbitt, Joy B. [PARENT_OF]

Daughter

Smith, Michael [SIBLING_OF]

Brother

Smith, Yvonne Sarvis [CHILD_OF]

Mother

Smith III, Townsend [SIBLING_OF]

Brother

SMith, Sherina [SIBLING_OF]

Sister

Nesbitt, Jessica Y. [PARENT_OF]

Daughter

Quigley High School [STUDENT_OF]

Quigley Catholic High School [STUDENT_OF]

[from ? to 1981]

Diploma

Gannon University [STUDENT_OF]

[from ? to 1984]

B.S.

Hahnemann [STUDENT_OF]

[from ? to 1988]

M.D.

University of Michigan [STUDENT_OF]

[from ? to 2000]

M.S.

Allegheny General Hospital [EMPLOYEE_OF]

[from 1988 to 1991]

Resident

University of Michigan [EMPLOYEE_OF]

[from 1991 to 2001]

Fellow and Faculty

University of Texas Southwestern [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2001 to ?]

Physician

Jack and Jill of America, Inc [MEMBEROF]
Executive Committee

International Society of Hypertension in Blacks [MEMBEROF]
Vice President

American Society of Hypertension [MEMBEROF]
Member

American Heart Association [MEMBEROF]
Council of Advisors