

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert Wright

PERSON

Wright, Robert Lee, 1937-

Alternative Names: Robert Wright;

Life Dates: March 17, 1937-

Place of Birth: Columbus, Georgia, USA

Residence: Alexandria, VA

Occupations: Civil Rights Activist; City Council Member; Technology Chief Executive

Biographical Note

Dimensions International, Inc., founder and chairman emeritus Robert Lee Wright was born on March 17, 1937, in Columbus, Georgia, to a bricklayer and a nurse. After graduating from high school, Wright went on to attend Ohio State University where he became classmates with future world class athletes Bob Ferguson and Mel Noel. Wright graduated in 1960 from Ohio State University College of Optometry with his degree in optometry. He returned to Georgia where

he began practicing as an optometrist.

Upon his return home to Georgia, Wright became deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1965, he participated in the Selma to Montgomery March. Then, in 1968, Wright's career interest changed to politics when he was recruited by the Republican Party to run for Columbus City Council. He won and was re-elected three times before being appointed to the position of Associate Administrator for Minority Small Business and Capital Ownership Development by President Ronald Reagan. After two years of working with the Reagan Administration, Wright resigned, and in 1985, he founded Dimensions International, Inc. Through Dimensions International, Wright began providing leading-edge technology to the government and private sector in the fields of systems engineering, information technology, and airspace management. A core subsidiary of Dimensions International is Flight Explorer, the leading provider of web-based global flight tracking information. Under Wright's leadership, Dimensions International grew to a multimillion dollar defense contractor, listed amongst Black Enterprise's 100.

Wright was chairman of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and of the Sub-Saharan Advisory Committee of the Export-Import Bank of the United States. Since 1999, he has been a director of Aflac, Inc. He has received many awards and recognitions, including the 2001 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award in Technology Services; the Man of the Year of the National Federation of Black Women Business Owners; the 2007 Boy Scouts of America Distinguished Citizen Award; the NAACP Achievement Award; and the Push Excellence Award.

Related Entries

Spencer High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Fifth Avenue School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

The Ohio State University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Self-Employed [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1961 to 1980]

Optometrist

Columbus Council [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1971 to 1979]

City Councilman

U.S. Small Business Administration [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1980 to 1982]

Administrator

Dimensions International, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1985 to 2007]

Founder and CEO

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Lifetime Member

National Museum of African American History and Culture [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Aflac, Inc. [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Export-Import Bank of the United States [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Sub-Saharan Advisory Committee