

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Amy S. Hilliard

PERSON

Hilliard, Amy, 1952-

Alternative Names: Amy S. Hilliard; Amy Hilliard

Life Dates: August 16, 1952-

Place of Birth: Detroit, Michigan, USA

Work: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Corporate Chief Executive; Marketing Executive

Biographical Note

Comfort Cake founder and CEO Amy Sharmane Hilliard was born Audrey Sharmane Amy Hilliard on August 16, 1952 in Detroit, Michigan. Hilliard received her B.S. degree (with honors) from Howard University in 1974 and her M.B.A. from Harvard Business School in 1978.

After school, Hilliard went to work for Bloomingdale's as a member of their buying team in New York. In

1981, Hilliard joined the Gillette Company in the Personal Care Division working in Product Management. She led the team that successfully created and launched White Rain Shampoo in six months. In addition, Hilliard managed the development and execution of the multiple brand Miss America promotion during this period. By 1985, Hilliard was promoted to Senior Product Manager for Gillette at Division Headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts. She was responsible for the general management of Gillette's largest personal care business, the \$100 million White Rain hair care products franchise. In 1987, Hilliard became the Director of Marketing for the Lustrasilk Corporation (a Gillette subsidiary) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In Minneapolis, Hilliard left Gillette in 1990 to work for The Pillsbury Company where, as the Director of Market Development, Baked Goods Division, she helped create some of the first Pillsbury Doughboy advertisements that were targeted to people of color. In 1992, Hilliard began working for the Burrell Communications Group in Chicago, Illinois as Senior Vice President and Director of Integrated Marketing Services. Burrell Communications Group specializes in developing advertising and marketing campaigns targeting African American consumers and the urban market. Hilliard then founded The Hilliard Group, Inc. in 1995 and served as its President and CEO. The Hilliard Group specialized in developing multi-cultural marketing and sales strategies for Fortune 500 corporations. In 1999, Hilliard became Senior Vice President of Marketing for Soft Sheen Products, a Division of L'Oreal U.S.A. While still working at L'Oreal, Hilliard made the decision to go into business for herself. Hilliard founded The Comfort Cake Company on February 15, 2001 and serves as its president and CEO. By 2002, The Comfort Cake Company had expanded into the Chicago Public School system cafeterias, and by 2003, Comfort Cakes were being sold on Amazon.com and in 7-Eleven stores.

Formerly an adjunct professor at DePaul University's

business school, Hilliard has lectured at leading universities including Harvard, The University of Chicago, Northwestern, Duke and UCLA. She has consulted internationally in London and in South Africa, where she presented business development opportunities to President Nelson Mandela's cabinet. Her work has been profiled in The Wall Street Journal, Ad Age, Business Week, Working Woman, Entrepreneur Magazine, Essence, Black Enterprise, and Ebony among others. In 2005, Hilliard published a book entitled, Tap Into Your Juice: Find Your Gifts, Lose Your Fears, Build Your Dreams.

Hilliard is the proud mother of two active teenagers, Angelica and Nicholas.

Hilliard was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 14, 2008.

Related Entries

Roosevelt Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Ludington Magnet Middle and Honors School
[STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Cass Technical High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Howard University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Home Economics

Harvard Business School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

[EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

[EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

The May Department Stores Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Assistant Fashion Buyer

Bloomingdale's [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Fashion Buyer

Joseph's [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1970 to 1971]

Salesman

Polaroid Corporation [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1973 to 1973]

Camera Girl

Bloomingdale's [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1975]

Assistant Fashion Buyer

Young & Rubicam [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1977 to 1977]

Intern

Gillette [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1981 to 1985]

Assistant Brand Manager

Gillette [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1984 to 1985]

Brand Manager

Gillette [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1985 to 1987]

New Product Development

Lustrasilk [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1987 to 1989]

Director of Marketing

Pillsbury Company [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1989 to 1992]

Director of Market Development

Burrell Communications Group [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1992 to 1993]

Vice President of Integrated Marketing Services

The Hilliard Group [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1993 to ?]

Founder

L'Oreal [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1997 to 2000]

Senior Vice President of Marketing

Comfort Cakes Co LLC [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2001 to ?]

Founder

Girl Scouts of the USA [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Chicago Urban League [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

