

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Barbara Ransby

PERSON

Ransby, Barbara

**Alternative Names:** Barbara Ransby;

**Life Dates:** May 12, 1957-

**Place of Birth:** Detroit, Michigan, USA

**Residence:** Chicago, IL

**Work:** Chicago, IL

**Occupations:** History Professor; African American Studies Professor

## Biographical Note

African American studies and history professor Barbara Ransby was born on May 12, 1957 in Detroit, Michigan. As an infant, Ransby was adopted by Charlie and Ethel Ransby. She completed her B.A. degree in history from Columbia University in 1984. During her time at Columbia, Ransby worked for the Institute of African Affairs and the Department of History as a research assistant. Ransby received her M.S. degree in history from University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1987. While at the University of Michigan, she taught African American studies. Ransby founded the Ella Baker-Nelson Mandela Center for Anti-Racist Education in 1988 and the African American Women in Defense of Ourselves Organization in 1991. She served as an instructor of history at DePaul University from 1992 to 1995; and an assistant professor and director of the Center for African American Research from 1995 to 1996. Ransby received her Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 1996.

Following the completion of her education, she joined the faculty of the University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) as an assistant professor in the departments of history and African American studies. In 1998, Ransby co-founded the Black Radical Congress and in 2002, she was promoted to associate professor at UIC. In 2003, Ransby authored the award-winning biography of civil rights activist Ella Baker, entitled *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*. In 2004, she received the Coordinating Council for Women in History's Prelinger Award. Since 2008, Ransby has served as professor and director of UIC's Gender and Women Studies Department and in 2011, she was appointed interim vice provost for planning and programs at UIC. She has written many articles and contributed to several books on civil rights, black feminism and African American history.

Ransby has served on the board of directors for many organizations including the CrossRoads Fund, Chicago Reporter Magazine, Anti-Racism Institute and the Chicago Coalition in Solidarity with Southern Africa. She has been a member of the Association of Black Women Historians, the Coordinating Committee for Women in Historical Profession and the Organization of American Historians. Ransby serves on the editorial board of The Race and Class Journal and on the editorial advisory board of The Black Commentator, an online publication. She is married to Peter Sporn; the couple have two children Asha and Jason.

Barbara Ransby was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on January 19, 2012.

## Related Entries

**Columbia University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**University of Michigan** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.A.**

**University of Michigan** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Ph.D.**

**Columbian Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**St. Leo High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Rosary High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Wayne State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**DePaul University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1941 to ?]

**Instructor**

**DePaul University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1971 to ?]

**Professor of History**

**University of Illinois, Chicago** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Professor of African American Studies, Professor of History**

**Team for Justice, Inc.** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Counselor**

**Project Headline** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Social Worker**

**North End Concerned Citizens Community Council** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Social Worker**

**Progressive Media Project** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Writer**

**Ella Baker-Nelson Mandela Center for Anti-Racist Education** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 2003 to ?]

**Founder**

**African Women in Defense of Ourselves Organization** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Founder**

**CrossRoads Fund** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1986 to ?]

**Coalition for a Free South Africa** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Co-founder**

**University Senate** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Student Representative**

**Association of Black Women Historians (U.S.)** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Free South Africa Coordinating Committee** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**United Coalition Against Racism** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Black Radical Congress** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

