Biographical Description for 
The HistoryMakers® Video 
Oral History with Sharon Barnes

Barnes, Sharon, 1955-

Alternative Names: Barnes, Sharon, 1955-

Life Dates: November 28, 1955-

Place of Birth: Beaumont, Texas

Residence:

Occupations: Biologist; Chemist

Biographical Note

Biologist and chemist Sharon J. Barnes was born on November 28, 1955 to Selena and William Jefferson McDonald in Beaumont, Texas. She attended Silsbee High School where she received three scholarships to attend college. In 1978, Barnes received her B.S. degree in biology-chemistry and clinical laboratory science. During her time in college, she interned at clinical laboratory science program for the Baptist Hospital of Southeast Texas.

After college, Barnes began working as a medical technologist in the clinical laboratory at the Waco Veterans Administration Medical Center. During this same year, she received her certification as a clinical laboratory scientist from the American Society of Clinical Pathologists. In 1981, Barnes obtained a new position at Brazosport Regional Health Center where she worked as an assistant lab director. Six years later, she pursued her interest as a chemist at the Dow Chemical Company serving as a special chemistry lab supervisor. A year later, she received her certification as clinical laboratory director from the National Certification Agency and became the Clinical Laboratory Director at Dow Chemical Company in the Occupational Health Department. In 1991, Barnes obtained a U.S. Patent for a new application in Infrared
Thermography Technology. She was a member of a team of five, including one other African American, who invented the process and apparatus for contactless measurements of sample temperature. Barnes has also worked as a QA/QC chemist in research & development in the Texas Analytical and Environmental Lab. In 1996, Barnes became Dow Chemical Company’s training specialist as well as manager for site wide training and development. She eventually assumed the role as human resource partner and consultant. In 2005, she received her M.B.A. in human resources management from the University of Phoenix and later became a human resources associate director for the performance plastics division after serving as a functional HR Partner for R&D and the site HR Director at Seadrift Operations.

In 1991, Barnes was named a Dow Texas Inventor; she has also received the Boy Scouts’ Outstanding Scouter Award twice from Dow Chemical Company; and she was selected as one of the 50 Most Influential Blacks in Research by Engineer.com. Barnes was named a Distinguished Alumnae in 2003 by Baylor University, Waco Texas. That same year, she was elected to serve as National Secretary for the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE). She has received two gubernatorial appointments. She serves on the District One Review Committee for Harris, Galveston and Brazoria countries (appointed by Governor George W. Bush and re-appointed by Governor Rick Perry) and on the council for Health and Human Services. Barnes currently resides in Houston, Texas with her husband Ronald Barnes. They have two children together, Ronald Barnes II and Amber Crawford.

Sharon J. Barnes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 14, 2012.

Related Entries

Barnes, Ronald [SPOUSE OF] Husband

McDonald, Selena [CHILD OF] Mother


McDonald, William A. [GRANDCHILD OF] Paternal Grandfather

Boradnax, Betty J. [GRANDCHILD OF] Maternal Grandmother

McDonald, Mary T. [GRANDCHILD OF]
Paternal Grandmother

Clemons, Betty [SIBLING OF]
   Sister

Charles, Willane [SIBLING OF]
   Brother

McDonald, William W. [SIBLING OF]
   Brother

Barnes III, Ronald [PARENT OF]
   Son

Crawford, Amber [PARENT OF]
   Daughter

McDonald, William J. [CHILD OF]
   Father

Silsbee High School [STUDENT OF]
   [from ? to 1974-05-23]

Baylor University [STUDENT OF]
   [from ? to 1978-08-09]
   B.S. Biology/Chemistry

University of Phoenix [STUDENT OF]
   [from ? to 2005-09-10]
   MBA Human Resource Management

VA Medical Center [EMPLOYEE OF]
   [from 1979 to 1981]

   Technologist

Brazosport Reginal Health Center [EMPLOYEE OF]
   [from 1981 to 1987]

   Assistant Lab Director

The Dow Chemical Company [EMPLOYEE OF]
   [from 1987 to ?]

   Associate Human Resources Director

City Council of Lake Jackson [MEMBER OF]
   Mayor Pro Tem/Council Member

Texas Medical Board [MEMBER OF]
District Review Committee

Health and Human Services Council [MEMBER Of]
  Council Member

NobCChE [MEMBER Of]
  National Secretary

Boys and Girls Club of Brazoria County [MEMBER Of]
  Board Secretary