

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Mary Harris

PERSON

Harris, Mary

Alternative Names: Harris, Mary;

Life Dates: June 26, 1949-

Place of Birth: Nashville, Tennessee

Residence: , (from ? to ?)

Occupations: Health Reseacher; ;

Biographical Note

Health researcher Mary Styles Harris was born on June 26, 1949 in Nashville, Tennessee. She later moved to Miami. Her father, George Styles, was finishing his studies at Meharry Medical College, and her mother, Margaret, had completed her degree in business administration at Tennessee State University. In 1963 Harris was one of the first African Americans to enter Miami Jackson High School. Four years later, she graduated 12th out of a class of 350. Harris graduated from Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) in 1971, and then enrolled at Cornell University where she Ford Foundation Doctoral Fellowship to study molecular genetics. She graduated with her Ph.D. degree in 1975.

In 1977, Harris became the executive director of the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, where she raised money to fight sickle-cell anemia and was in a position to inform the public about this very serious condition. Harris was awarded a Science Residency Award by the National Science Foundation. After a period spent in Washington, D.C. completing her Science Residency, Harris became the state director of Genetic Services for the Georgia Department of Human Resources. From this position, she could also influence health policies nationwide, and her advice was sought by health officials in other states. In addition to work in Genetic Services, Harris was a part-time

assistant professor at Morehouse College in Atlanta and at Atlanta University. To make life even busier, the couple's daughter was born during this period. Then, Harris became founder and president of BioTechnical Communications, which actively focuses on health issues by producing audiovisual materials on such health topics as breast cancer, an issue of major concern among minority women.

Harris' interest in preventive health care has led her to get involved in newborn screening of Sickle-cell disease and sitting on the Atlanta board of the March of Dimes. Also, she has produced television and radio shows, and she hosts a radio show, "Journey To Wellness," and has developed a documentary, "To My Sisters... A Gift For Life." Harris has received several awards for her research and advocacy, including the National Cancer Research postdoctoral fellowship, the Ford Foundation Doctoral Fellowship, and the Outstanding Working Woman from 'Glamour magazine.'

Mary Styles Harris was interviewed by 'The HistoryMakers' on December 11, 2012.

Related Entries

Styles, Mary Major [GRANDCHILD**OF**]

Paternal Grandmother

Styles, George M. [GRANDCHILD**OF**]

Paternal Grandfather

Houston, Alberta Hays [GRANDCHILD**OF**]

Maternal Grandmother

Bays, Fred, DDS [GRANDCHILD**OF**]

Maternal Grandfather

Kusimo, Patricia Styles, Ph.D. [SIBLING**OF**]

Sister

Styles, George W., M.D. [CHILD**OF**]

Father

Harris, Savaria B. []

Child

Styles, Margaret Bays [CHILD**OF**]

Mother

Styles, George W. [SIBLING**OF**]

Brother

New Jersey University of Medicine and Dentistry [STUDENT**OF**]

[from ? to 1977-07]

Post-doctoral

Cornell University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to 1975-01]

Ph.D.

Lincoln University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to 1971-06]

B.S.

Miami Jackson Senior High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1977 to 1979]

Executive Director

National Science Foundation (NSF) [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1978 to 1980]

Scientist-In-Residence

Morehouse College School of Medicine [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1978 to 1981]

Assistant Professor

WGTV [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1978 to 1980]

Scientist in Residence/Exec. Producer & Host

Atlanta University [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1981 to 1982]

Director

Emory University [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1982 to 1983]

Instructor, School of Nursing

Medical College of Georgia [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1983 to 1987]

Assistant Clinical Professor, Dept. of Obstetrics & Gynecology

Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Public Health

[EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1984 to 1987]

Director, Genetics Services

BioTechnical Communications, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1987 to ?]

President and CEO

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) [MEMBEROF]

Parent Review Committee, Comprehensive Sickle Cell Centers

Center for Disease Control [MEMBEROF]

Member, Board of Visitors

Grady Hospital [MEMBEROF]

Member, Board of Visitors

Families First [MEMBEROF]

Member, Board of Directors

International Women's Forum [MEMBEROF]

Member

National Caucus and Center on Black Aged [MEMBEROF]

Member, Board of Directors