

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Michelle Gadsden- Williams

PERSON

Gadsden-Williams, Michelle,  
1969-

**Alternative Names:** Michelle Gadsden-Williams;

**Life Dates:** May 21, 1969-

**Residence:** Somerset, NJ

**Work:** New York, NY

**Occupations:** Management Executive

## Biographical Note

Management executive Michelle Gadsden-Williams was born on May 21, 1969. She graduated summa cum laude with her B.S. degree in marketing and her B.A. degree in communications from Kean College in 1990. Gadsden-Williams later enrolled in the University of

Pennsylvania and graduated with honors with her M.S. degree in organizational dynamics in 2006.

Gadsden-Williams served as a diversity practitioner for more than twenty years in pharmaceutical and financial services. She held positions of increasing responsibility in the diversity management and staffing functions at Merck & Company, Inc., including as senior university relations and diversity consultant, future-talent program and diversity manager, and manager of diversity programs. Gadsden-Williams also held positions in the human resources division and in product management at Philips-Van Heusen Corporation and Wakefern Food Corporation in New Jersey. In 2006, Gadsden-Williams became the first African American executive director of diversity and inclusion at Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation. She was later appointed as managing director and global head of diversity and inclusion and as a member of the Talent, Branding and Communications Management Committee at Credit Suisse AG based in Zurich, Switzerland.

Gadsden-Williams was appointed as a member of the Global Advisory Council on Values for the World Economic Forum, and as a board member of the Jackie Robinson Foundation. She is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., a board member of the SLE Lupus Foundation in New York City, and an executive committee Member of the Women's Leadership Board of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Gadsden-Williams has been profiled in Black Enterprise Magazine, Diversity Executive, Ebony, Essence, Fortune, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. Gadsden-Williams is the recipient of a number of community service awards and accolades for her work as a diversity practitioner. She received Novartis' Scientific Operations Business Excellence Award in 2004 and its Human Resources Excellence Award in 2003. In 2005, she was honored at the

YWCA of Central New Jersey's Tribute to Women in Industry Gala. She was the 2010 recipient of the Maya Way Award for Diversity Leadership from Dr. Maya Angelou, and has received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters Degree from Kean University.

Michelle Gadsden-Williams was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 13, 2013.

## Related Entries

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

**M.S.**

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

**B.S.**

**James Madison Primary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**James Madison Intermediate School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**John P. Stevens High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Fashion Institute of Technology** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Merck & Co.** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1973 to 1974]

**Diversity Management and Staffing**

**Phillips Van Heusen** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Human Resources and Product Management**

**Wakefern Food Corporation** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1967 to 1970]

**Human Resources and Product Management**

**Novartis AG** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2002 to 2006]

**Vice President and Global Diversity Officer**

**Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2006 to 2011]

**Executive Director, Diversity and Inclusion**

**Credit Suisse Group AG** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2011 to ?]

**Managing Director**

**Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**SLE Lupus** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Board Member**

**Women's Leadership Board of the John F. Kennedy  
School of Government at Harvard University**

[MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Executive Committee Member**

**World Economic Forum** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Global Advisory Council on Values**

