

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sheila Talton

PERSON

Talton, Sheila Gayle, 1952-

Alternative Names: Sheila Talton;

Life Dates: October 12, 1952-

Place of Birth: Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Work: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Technology Executive

Biographical Note

Technology executive and entrepreneur Sheila G. Talton was born on October 12, 1952 in Cleveland, Ohio. As a teenager, she became involved in the civil rights movement in Rockford, Illinois. Talton went on to graduate from Northern Illinois University with her B.S. degree in business administration and speech communications in 1980

Upon graduation, Talton was hired as a sales trainee at NCR Corporation. She became head of Midwest sales for Data Group Systems in Chicago in 1982, moving on to a position as team leader in the sales department of Applied Data Research (ADR) in 1984. Taking advantage of a void left by the breakup of AT&T, Talton founded Unisource Network Services, a provider of voice, data and video networking consultation and support services, in 1987. In 1996, while still leading Unisource, she helped establish the Information Technology Senior Management Forum, a mentoring group that cultivates executive talent among African American IT professionals. Talton sold her stake in Unisource in 2000, and was hired as the vice president of Cap Gemini, Ernst & Young's Midwest technology consulting practice. In 2002, she was named president of global business innovation services for Electronic Data Systems (EDS). Talton was hired by the computer networking company Cisco Systems Inc. in 2004 where she became vice president of advisory services in the Customer Advocacy Group. She was promoted to a role as vice president of Cisco's Office of Globalization in 2008 and helped the company identify growth opportunities in emerging markets around the world. She left Cisco in 2012 to found the consulting firm SGT, Ltd. In 2013, Talton established Gray Matter Analytics, Inc., a business providing consulting services and cloud hosting service for analytics.

Talton has served as a member of the board of directors of the ACCO Brands Corporation, the Wintrust Financial Corporation, the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, the Northwestern Memorial Hospital Foundation, the Lighthouse for the Blind, and the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Her honors include selection as a Congressional appointee on the US White House Women's Business Council, as one of the "Top 10 Women in Technology" by Enterprising Women, and as "Entrepreneur of the Year" by the National Federation of Black Women Business Owners. She is also a recipient of the "Entrepreneurial

Excellence Award” from Working Woman magazine and a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy Award. She was named a 2007 “Woman Worth Watching” by Profiles in Diversity Journal, received a 2008 Egretta Award from the African American Women’s Business and Career Conference, and was named a 2009 Business Leader of Color by Chicago United. In 2010 she was honored as a Woman of Achievement by the Anti-Defamation League, and as the Outstanding College Alumni of the Year by the Business School of Northern Illinois University. In 2011 she was named one of “25 Influential Black Women in Business” by The Network Journal and received the “Diamond Leadership Award” from the Information Technology Senior Management Forum.

Sheila G. Talton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 23, 2013.

Related Entries

Harvard Business School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

AMP 165

Northern Illinois University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

B.S.

West High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

High School Diploma

Rock Valley College [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Roosevelt-Perry Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Franklin School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Unisource Network Services [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1987 to 2000]

Founder, Chairman & CEO

CAP Gemini Ernst & Young [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2000 to 2002]

VP, Midwest Critical Technology Practice

CISCO Systems [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2004 to 2011]

VP, Office of Globalization; VP, CA Global Officer

EDS [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2004 to 2004]

Area VP, CONsumer Products, Retain & Healthcare

Sgt, LTD. (Sheila Talton, LTD.) [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2011 to 2013]

Founder, President & CEO

Sterling Partners [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1972 to ?]

Executive in Residence

Gray Matter Analytics, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1970 to 1998]

Founder, President & CEO

Information Technology Senior Management Forum

[MEMBEROF]

[from 2012 to ?]

Chicago Network [MEMBEROF]

[from 2013 to ?]

World President's Orgaization [MEMBEROF]

[from 2005 to ?]

Executive Leadership Council [MEMBEROF]

[from 2007 to ?]

National Association of Corporate Directors [MEMBEROF]

[from 2011 to ?]

Women Corporate Directors [MEMBEROF]

[from 2011 to ?]

Economic Club of Chicago [MEMBEROF]

[from 2012 to ?]

Chicago Council on Global Affairs [MEMBEROF]

[from 2012 to ?]