

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Alfreda Burke

PERSON

**Burke, Alfreda "Freda", 1961-**

**Alternative Names:** Alfreda Burke;

**Life Dates:** June 17, 1961-

**Place of Birth:** Chicago, Illinois, USA

**Residence:** Oak Lawn, IL

**Work:** New York, NY

**Occupations:** Singer

## Biographical Note

Opera singer Alfreda Burke was born in Chicago, Illinois on June 17, 1961. Her father, John H. Burke, Jr., was a pastor; her mother, Mamie Burke, a church administrator. She received her BM and MM degrees from Roosevelt University Chicago Musical College (1984, 1987).

Burke made her Carnegie and Orchestra Hall debuts in

Strauss' Elektra in 1995 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra led by Daniel Barenboim. She has also performed with numerous orchestras and at various venues in North America and Europe, including the Auditorium Theatre (1995); the Chicago Symphony Center (1997); the Chicago Symphony at Ravinia; the Kennedy Center (1998); the Detroit Opera House/DSO/Rackham Symphony Choir (2002); the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (2003); the Chorus Angelorum (2003, 2010); the Cincinnati Pops Symphony Orchestra (2011); the Chicagoland Pops Orchestra (2004); the Lancaster Festival (2003); the Umbria Music Festival (Italy) (2007); the Prague Philharmonic (2010); the TodiMusicFest (2007); the Millennium Park Gala (2008); the Miss World (China) (2012); and the NATO Chicago Summit (2012).

Burke's oratorio, opera, concert and musical theater engagements include the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts broadcast on WFMT-FM; Mozart's Requiem; Handel's Messiah; Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream; Beethoven's Mass in C; Poulenc Gloria; Mahler's 2nd & 8th Symphonies; Strauss' Elektra; Puccini's Turandot; Tchaikovsky's Iolanta; Barber's Knoxville: Summer of 1915; Menotti's Amahl & the Night Visitors; Rutter's Requiem; Boulez's Le Visage Nuptial; Gershwin's Porgy & Bess; Bernstein's West Side Story; and Kern's Show Boat (Prince). She was featured in CSO's Symphony Center Inaugural Festival and Radiothon.

In 2002, Burke and her husband, opera singer Rodrick Dixon, performed in Too Hot to Handel The Jazz-Gospel Messiah at the Detroit Opera House and the Auditorium Theatre (2006). Burke performed with Tenors Cook, Dixon & Young (formerly the Three Mo' Tenors) as a featured soloist.

Burke's work in recordings, music video, television, radio, film and commercials, includes Celine Dion and R. Kelly's I'm Your Angel; The Visit; The Visitors; Unconditional Love; guest soloist appearances on

WTTW/Odyssey's broadcast, 30 Good Minutes; solo CD, From the Heart; the Prague PBS Special Hallelujah Broadway; and the Chicago Olympic 2016 Bid Anthem, I Will Stand. Some of Burke's other engagements include the Auditorium Theatre & DiBurke Inc. co-produced show "Songs of A Dream," CD release, and national tour; and Old St. Patrick's Church production of Siamsa na nGael at Symphony Center.

Burke has taught music and voice at a number of institutions, including Evanston/Skokie District 65 (1985-1996); the CSO Musicians Residency at South Shore Cultural Center (1996-1998); the Wheaton College Conservatory Voice Faculty (1998-2009); the Carl Sandburg High School (2004-2007); the Chicago State University Voice Faculty (2007-2008); the Young Musicians Choral Orchestra, Berkeley, California (2009-2012); the Wright State University Music & Medicine Symposium (2009-Present); and master classes throughout the US.

Burke is a Roosevelt University CCPA Advisory Board member and served on the Chicago 2016 Olympic Bid Arts & Culture Advisory Committee. In 2005, Burke was an Alumna Ambassador for Roosevelt University's 60th Anniversary.

Opera singer Alfreda Burke was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 20, 2013.

## Related Entries

**Roosevelt University** [STUDENTOF]  
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

**Master of Music**

**Roosevelt University** [STUDENTOF]  
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

**Bachelor of Music**

**Lindblom Math & Science Academy High School**

[STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Rudyard Kipling Elementary** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Mary Church Terrell Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**First Mennonite Church** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1972 to ?]

**Choir Director/Organist**

**CSO Community Outreach** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1996 to 1998]

**Voice Instructor**

**DiBurke, Inc.** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2004 to ?]

**President**

**Young Musicians Choral Orchestra** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2009 to 2012]

**Artist-In-Residency**

**Dr. Martin Luther King Experimental Lab Schools**

[EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 198508 to 199606]

**Gen. Music & Choral Yeache**

**Wheaton College Conservatory** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 199708 to 200905]

**Guest Lecturer in Voice**

**Chicago State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 200708 to 200805]

**Voice Faculty**

**National Association of Teachers of Singing** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**American Guild of Musicians Association, Actors'**

**Equity Association** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**Lake View Musical Society, Musicians Club of**

**Women** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1986 to ?]

**Member**

**Auditorium Theatre** [MEMBEROF]

[from 2005 to ?]

**Too Hot to Dream Soloist; Songs of a Dream**

**Partner**

**Roosevelt University/Chicago College of Performing**

**Arts** [MEMBEROF]

[from 2011 to ?]

**Board Member**