

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Eric Deggans

PERSON

Deggans, Eric

Alternative Names: Eric Deggans;

Life Dates: November 6, 1965-

Place of Birth: Washington, District of Columbia, USA

Residence: St. Petersburg, FL

Work: St. Petersburg, FL

Occupations: Journalist

Biographical Note

Journalist Eric Deggans was born on November 6, 1965 in Washington, D.C. He was raised in Gary, Indiana and graduated from Andean High School. In the 1980s, while attending Indiana University, Deggans worked as a professional drummer and toured with Motown recording artist The Voyage Band. He received his B.A. degree in political science and journalism from Indiana University in 1990.

Deggans first held municipal reporting positions at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Pittsburgh Press newspapers in Pennsylvania. He then served as the music critic for the Asbury Park Press newspaper in Neptune, New Jersey. In 1995, Deggans joined the Tampa Bay Times, then called the St. Petersburg Times, as its pop music critic. From 1997 to 2004, he worked as a TV critic for the Times, and, from 2004 to 2005, he sat on the paper's editorial board and wrote bylined opinion columns. Deggans then returned to the Tampa Bay Times news desk, first as a media writer in 2005, then as the TV critic in 2006. In 2010, he made national headlines when he interviewed former USDA official Shirley Sherrod at the National Association of Black Journalists' summer convention in San Diego, California. Deggans left the Tampa Bay Times in 2013 to take a job as NPR's first full-time TV critic.

Deggans published his first book, *Race-Baiter: How the Media Wields Dangerous Words to Divide a Nation*, in 2012. He also contributed to the Poynter Institute's *The New Ethics of Journalism*, which was published in August 2013. Deggans' writing has appeared in *The New York Times* online, *Salon* magazine, *CNN.com*, *The Washington Post*, *Village Voice*, *VIBE* magazine, *Chicago Tribune*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *The Seattle Times*, *Emmy* magazine, *Newsmax* magazine, and *Rolling*

Stone Online, among others. Deggans also taught at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, Loyola University, California State University, Indiana University, the University of Tampa, and Eckerd College, and has guest hosted CNN's media analysis show Reliable Sources.

Deggans served as chair of the Media Monitoring Committee for the National Association of Black Journalists, and sat on the board of directors for the national Television Critics Association and the Mid-Florida Society of Professional Journalists. In addition, he served on the board of educators, journalists and media experts who select the George Foster Peabody Awards for excellence in electronic media.

Deggans was named as one of Ebony magazine's "Power 150" in 2009. In 2013, he was awarded the Florida Press Club's first-ever Diversity Award, and the National Association of Black Journalists' Arts & Entertainment Task Force Legacy Award. Deggans also received reporting and writing awards from the Society for Features Journalism, American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors, the Society of Professional Journalists, and the Florida Society of News Editors.

Eric Deggans was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 12, 2014.

Related Entries

Frederick Douglass Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Hebrew Academy of Northwest Indiana [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Andrean High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Indiana University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Bachelor's

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Reporter

Pittsburgh Press [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Reporter

Asbury Park Press [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Music Critic

Tampa Bay Times [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1995 to 1997]

Pop Music Critic

Tampa Bay Times [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1997 to 2004]

TV Critic

Tampa Bay Times [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2004 to 2005]

Columnist and Editorial Board Member

Tampa Bay Times [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2005 to 2006]

Media Writer

Tampa Bay Times [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2006 to 2013]

TV Critic

NPR [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2013 to ?]

TV Critic

Society of Professional Journalists [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member, Tampa FL Chapter

Tampa Association of Black Journalists [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

President, Past President

TV Critics Association [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Peabody Awards [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member