

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Daryl Cumber Dance

PERSON

Dance, Daryl Cumber

**Alternative Names:** Daryl Cumber Dance;

**Life Dates:** January 17, 1938-

**Place of Birth:** Richmond, Virginia, USA

**Residence:** Richmond, VA

**Work:** VA

**Occupations:** English Professor

## Biographical Note

Educator Daryl Cumber Dance was born on January 17, 1938 in Richmond, Virginia to elementary school teacher Veronica Bell Cumber and entrepreneur Allen Cumber. Dance graduated from Ruthville High School in Ruthville, Virginia; and went on to earn her A.B. degree in English in 1957, and her M.A. degree in English in 1963, both from Virginia State College, now Virginia State University. She received her Ph.D.

degree in English from the University of Virginia in 1971.

Dance was hired as an English teacher at Armstrong High School in Richmond, Virginia in 1957. She remained at Armstrong until 1962, when she returned to her alma mater, Virginia State College, as an instructor of English. After obtaining her Ph.D. degree in 1971, Dance returned to Virginia State College for one year as an assistant professor of English. She left in 1972 to join the faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University as an assistant professor of English, becoming an associate professor of English in 1978, and obtaining full professorship in 1985. Between 1983 and 1984, Dance also served as the acting coordinator of the Afro-American Studies program at Virginia Commonwealth University. In 1993, she joined the faculty of the University of Richmond as a professor of English. She was named the Sterling A. Brown Professor of English at Howard University in 2013. Dance served as the Jessie Ball duPont Visiting Scholar at the University of Richmond as well as the visiting professor of Black Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Dance authored nine books, including *Shuckin' and Jivin': Folklore from Contemporary Black Americans* (1978), *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical and Critical Sourcebook* (1986), *Honey, Hush! An Anthology of African American Women's Humor* (1998), *From My People: 400 Years of African American Folklore* (2002), and *In Search of Annie Drew, the Mother and Muse of Jamaica Kincaid* (2016). Dance also served on several boards and committees, including the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, the Editorial Board of *Encyclopedia Virginia*, the University Press of Virginia Board of Directors, the Board of Visitors at Virginia State University, and the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada; in addition to her memberships in the American Folklore Society, the American Studies Association,

the Modern Language Association, the Zora Neale Hurston Society, the Richard Wright Society, and the Virginia Folklore Society.

She received numerous awards for her work, including the VCU Arts and Sciences Lecturer Award, the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education's Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award, the Sister Circle Book Award for Outstanding Anthology, the Zora Neale Hurston Award from the National Association of Black Storytellers Annual Conference, and The Sojourner Truth Award from The African American Studies Program of George Mason University. The Daryl Cumber Dance Lifetime Achievement Award was created in 2012 by the College Language Association in Dance's honor.

Daryl Cumber Dance was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on December 7, 2016.

## **Related Entries**

**Ruthville High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Virginia State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**A.B,**

**Virginia State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.A.**

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

**Ph.D,**

**Armstrong High School** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1957 to 1962]

**English Teacher**

**Virginia State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1962 to 1967]

**Instructor of English**

**Virginia State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1971 to 1972]

**Assistant Professor of English**

**Virginia Commonwealth University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1978 to 1985]

**Associate Professor of English**

**Virginia Commonwealth University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1985 to 1992]

**Professor of English**

**University of California, Santa Barbara** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1986 to 1987]

**Visiting Professor of African American Studies**

**University of Richmond** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1992 to 2012]

**Professor of English**

**University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth  
University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2012 to ?]

**Retired**

**Association of Theological Schools in U.S. and  
Canada** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1980 to 1983]

**Board Member**

**Equal Employment Opportunity Council** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1986 to 1988]

**Council Member**

**Board of Directors, University Press of Virginia**

[MEMBEROF]

[from 1990 to 1993]

**Board Member**

**Virginia State University** [MEMBEROF]

[from 2003 to 2014]

**Board Member**

**Editorial Board of Encyclopedia Virginia** [MEMBEROF]

[from 2006 to 2009]

**Internet Encyclopedia**