

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Edith C. McLoud Armstrong

PERSON

Armstrong, Edith C. McLoud, 1951-

Alternative Names: Edith C. McLoud Armstrong;

Life Dates: June 2, 1951-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Work: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Storyteller

Biographical Note

Storyteller Edith C. McLoud Armstrong was born on June 2, 1951 in Chicago, Illinois to Christine Smith McLoud and Maxel McLoud, Sr. In 1969, she graduated from Aquinas Dominican High School in Chicago. She received her B.S. degree in 1973 in speech-language pathology from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, and her M.H.S. degree in communication disorders from Governors State University in University Park, Illinois in 1989. Armstrong began working with the Chicago Public School (CPS) system in the late 1970s as a speech therapy assistant and started graduate school part-time in 1985. During this time, Armstrong provided therapy services for students with multiple disabilities and taught deaf students to speak. This population inspired her to create lesson plans that incorporated science, technology, engineering, the art of storytelling and math (a process now popularly referred to as STEAM). Armstrong left CPS in 1989 to complete her master's degree.

Her first invitation to provide paid storytelling services was right after resigning from CPS, after years of having created productions within the schools. This activity grew by word of mouth into a part-time profession. From 1989 to 2014, Armstrong served various organizations as an independent consultant as a speech and language pathologist.

In 2014, Armstrong left speech therapy and became a full-time Spanish/English bilingual spoken word artist, contributing author, motivational speaker, percussionist, educational consultant, and voice-over artist under the culturally given name of Mama Edie. She provides storytelling performances and workshops for parents, educators, children, social workers, attorneys and other professionals for diversity training, to

increase cultural appreciation, interpersonal communication skills, personal empowerment and to promote social justice. Performing also for cultural arts museums, festivals, social service agencies, faith-based organizations and the corporate sector, in 1998, Armstrong co-founded ASE: the Chicago Association of Black Storytellers. A master artist of storytelling in the African-American Oral Tradition, Armstrong uses a blend of Spanish and English or Sign Language. She includes interactive songs from various African and Native American cultures that reflect her own heritage. She has performed in Ghana, Togo, Benin, Mexico, India, Trinidad, South Africa, and has been a guest on various PBS and other television and radio programs. She also authored numerous articles on self-empowerment through cultural knowledge and pride; countering violence through effective communication, storytelling, music and movement; and language and literary development through the arts.

Armstrong's memberships have included the National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc.; National Storytelling Network; ASE: The Chicago Association of Black Storytellers; American Speech, Language & Hearing Association; National Black Child Development Institute; Afro-Latin Institute; and the American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers (ASCAP). A highlight of her career was the invitation to participate as the storyteller in an international peace conference in Iraq in 2017. The article describing this experience has now been published by Storytelling Magazine, an international publication of the National Storytelling Network.

Armstrong has one daughter, Ayana Diane.

Edith C. McLoud Armstrong was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 21, 2018.

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