

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Andre Harrell

PERSON

Harrell, Andre

Alternative Names: Andre Harrell;

Life Dates: September 26, 1960-May 7, 2020

Place of Birth: New York City, New York, USA

Work: Los Angeles, CA

Occupations: Record Executive

Biographical Note

Producer and record executive Andre Harrell was born on September 26, 1960 in Harlem, New York. Harrell attended Eastern Academy and Junior High School 123. After graduating from Charles Evans Hughes High School in 1978, Harrell attended Baruch College. He later transferred to Lehman College, where he majored in communications and business management.

In 1976, Harrell and high school friend, Alonzo Brown, formed the hip hop duo, Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde; and in 1980, they signed with Tayster and Rojac Records in Harlem. They released several hit songs including “Genius Rap,” “Fast Life,” and “AM/PM” as well as the 1984 album, *The Champagne of Rap*. Harrell left Lehman College during his junior year to work as an account executive at the gospel station WWRL. A year later, he joined the local radio station WINS. In 1983, Harrell began working for Russell Simmons at RUSH Management, and within two years, he became the vice president and general manager, helping to launch the careers of Run-DMC, LL Cool J, and Whodini. In 1986, Harrell founded his own record label, Uptown Records, where he worked with Heavy D. & The Boyz, Al B. Sure, Notorious B.I.G., Guy, Jodeci, McGruff, Sean Combs, Lost Boyz, and The Gyrllz. He also worked with Mary J. Blige, releasing her debut album, *What’s the 411?*, with Uptown in 1992. That same year, Harrell accepted a multimedia deal with MCA Music Entertainment Group. He also served as the executive producer of Fox’s hit crime television show, *New York Undercover*, which aired from 1994 to 1998, and as executive producer of several films, including *Strictly Business* in 1991, and *Honey* in 2003. Harrell became the chief executive officer of Motown Records in 1995, where he oversaw the careers of Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, and Queen Latifah. Harrell also founded Nu Records, and served as an executive producer on Robin Thicke’s and Pharrell William’s 2013 hit song “Blurred Lines.” In 2013, Harrell became the vice chairman of Sean Combs’

multimedia company, Revolt TV Network.

In 2009, Harrell received a Cultural Excellence Award from the National Action Network. He was also the recipient of BET's Culture Creators Award in 2016.

Andre Harrell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 23, 2018 and November 21, 2019.

Related Entries

Jhs 123 James M Kiernan [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Charles Evans Hughes High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Baruch College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Lehman College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

WWRL [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Account Executive

WINS [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

RUSH Management [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1983 to ?]

Vice President and General Manager

Uptown Records [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1986 to 1995]

Founder

MCA Music Entertainment Group [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1988 to ?]

New York Undercover [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1994 to 1998]

Producer

Motown Records [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1995 to ?]

Chief Executive Officer

Bad Boy Records [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

President

Nu Records [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Founder

Revolt TV Network [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2013 to ?]

Vice Chair