

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jerry Thomas, Jr.

PERSON

Thomas, Jerry, 1952-

Alternative Names: Jerry Thomas, Jr.;

Life Dates: June 8, 1952-

Place of Birth: Washington, District of Columbia, USA

Residence: Atlanta, GA

Work: Atlanta, GA

Occupations: Lawyer; Gallery Owner

Biographical Note

Lawyer and gallery owner Jerry Thomas, Jr. was born on June 8, 1952 in Washington, D.C to Jerry, Sr., and Estell Thomas. He received his B.A. degree in 1974 from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut and his J.D. degree in 1977 from The George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C. He also received a certificate in International Law, Business, Trade Commerce and Negotiations in 1986 from The Hague Academy of International Law in The Hague, the Netherlands.

After graduation, Thomas went to work for the U.S. Congress as a staff aide in Washington, D.C. In the late 1980s, he served as a lawyer at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in Washington, D.C. Thomas was named director of administration for the 1990 Goodwill Games where he was responsible for control of the overall operation of the international event. Thomas was admitted to the Georgia State Bar in 1990. He also established the Law Offices of Jerry Thomas, LLC in Atlanta, Georgia and served as managing partner for over sixteen years. In 1995, he founded Jerry Thomas Arts in Atlanta, Georgia, where he served as owner, art broker, curator and consultant.

His collection includes works from; Romare Bearden, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Thornton Dial and Sam Middleton. In 2012, Thomas' own Romare Bearden collection was featured when the Romare Bearden Foundation hired him to curate the art for Atlanta's observance of the artist's 100th birthday. In 2013, he set a record price for the sale of a Thornton Dial artwork to record producer Swizz Beatz. In 2015, Thomas collaborated with Alan Avery, owner of the Alan Avery Art Company in Atlanta, to showcase the work of Romare Bearden at an exhibition.

Thomas also has been a featured speaker at conferences, and in 2005, he delivered a speech at the National Black MBA Association Annual Conference on investing and collecting African American Art and has been quoted in the Los Angeles Times, BusinessWeek magazine, and the London Stock Exchange regarding the investment potential of African American art. Thomas also served as chair of the Fulton County Arts Council. In addition, Thomas served as a founding board member of the Edwin Moses Foundation, an initiative supporting science, technology, engineering, and math education.

Jerry Thomas, Jr. was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 9, 2018.

Related Entries

Nalle Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

McKinley Technology High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Wesleyan University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

George Washington University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

The Hague Academy of International Law [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Neighborhood Legal Services [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1978 to 1979]

Attorney

Federal Communications Commission [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1980 to 1986]

Attorney

Goodwill Games (TBS) [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1986 to 1988]

Director of Administration

Thomas and McDonald, LLC [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1989 to 2009]

Founding Partner

Jerry Thomas Arts [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2000 to ?]

Art Dealer and Advisor

100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc. [MEMBEROF]

[from 2002 to ?]

Member

Fulton County Arts Council [MEMBEROF]

[from 2015 to 2017]

Chairman

Cobb Marietta Museum of Art [MEMBEROF]

[from 1996 to 2003]

Member

Hammonds House Museum [MEMBEROF]

[from 2005 to 2009]

Board Member