

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Anita DeFrantz

PERSON

DeFrantz, Anita L.

**Alternative Names:** Anita DeFrantz;

**Life Dates:** October 4, 1952-

**Place of Birth:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

**Residence:** Santa Monica, CA

**Work:** Santa Monica, CA

**Occupations:** Olympics Executive

## Biographical Note

Nonprofit executive and Olympic athlete Anita DeFrantz was born on October 4, 1952 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Robert David and Anita Page DeFrantz. In 1970, she graduated from Shortridge High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. DeFrantz received her B.A. degree in political philosophy in 1974 from Connecticut College, and her J.D. degree in 1977 from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in Philadelphia.

DeFrantz captained the U.S. women's rowing team and rowed in the eight boat that won a bronze medal at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games. In 1977, she started her career as a staff attorney at the Juvenile Law Center of Philadelphia, and was admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar. In 1980, she led the athletes' fight for the right to compete at the Moscow Olympic Games, including suing the United States Olympic Committee. The International Olympic Committee honored her with the bronze medal of the Olympic Order. DeFrantz served as vice president of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee and was elected to International Olympic Committee membership in 1986, the first African American and the first American woman to serve on the committee. In 1987, DeFrantz was named president of the LA84 Foundation. From 1989 to 1994, she served on the IOC's Program Commission and is credited with the acceptance of women's soccer and softball onto the Olympic program. DeFrantz also helped increase the number of women's competition opportunities on the Olympic program. She was elected to the IOC Executive Board in 1992 and appointed to the IOC's Olympic Program Commission. In 1995, she was appointed chair of the Women and Sport Working Group; and, in 1997, DeFrantz was the first woman elected to a four-year term as vice president. DeFrantz established the Tubman Truth Corporation in 2016 and served as president. She also served on LA 2028, the Los Angeles organizing

committee for the 2028 summer Olympic Games, and was a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) where she was elected for a second term as a vice president in 2018.

From 1991 to 1999, The Sporting News named DeFrantz one of the 100 most powerful people in sports. In 2003, Sports Illustrated named her one of the 101 most influential minorities in sports; and, in 2006, the NCAA named her one of NCAA's Most 100 Influential Student Athletes. The French magazine L'Equipe named DeFrantz one of the 10 Women Who Changed Sport in 2010; and, the following year, Newsweek named her one of 150 Women Who Shake the World, and Los Angeles magazine named her one of 10 Women Making a Difference in Los Angeles. In 2016, she received the Olympic Truce Award at the Rio Olympic Games. DeFrantz has also received honorary doctorate degrees from Pepperdine University, Mount Holyoke College and Pomona College. She received the Distinguished Leadership Award from the Center for Sociocultural Sport and Olympic Research (CSSOR) at California State University, Fullerton.

Anita DeFrantz was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on December 12, 2018.

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