

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Gretchen Tucker Underwood

PERSON

Underwood, Gretchen Tucker, 1943-

Alternative Names: Gretchen Tucker Underwood;

Life Dates: October 11, 1943-

Place of Birth: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Residence: Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

Occupations: Academic Administrator

Biographical Note

Academic administrator Gretchen Tucker Underwood was born on October 11, 1943 in Boston, Massachusetts to Judge Herbert Tucker and Mary Tucker. After graduating from Jamaica Plain High School in 1961, Tucker Underwood attended Howard University before transferring to Southern Connecticut State University, where she received her B.S. degree in education in 1968. In 1972, Tucker Underwood went on to receive her M.A. degree in educational administration and a certificate of advance graduate study from Boston State College.

After teaching social studies for three years at Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, Connecticut, Tucker Underwood was hired as a teacher at Brookline High School in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1970. She later became the school's Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) coordinator. By 1996, Tucker Underwood was promoted to dean of students of Brookline High School. In the 1990s, she was also the first African American elected as a town meeting member while living in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Tucker Underwood served Brookline High School as the dean of students until her retirement in 2007, after thirty-seven years with the school. In 2008, Tucker Underwood moved to Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts; and, in 2014, she ran for Dukes County Commissioner as a democratic write-in candidate, and was elected to one of the seven seats. Tucker Underwood was re-elected to the seat in both 2016 and 2018. In 2019, she was appointed chair of the commission.

Tucker Underwood chairs the annual celebration commemorating an artist, educator, and writer from Martha's Vineyard, Della Hardman. She was a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, an advisory council member for Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative, and has served on the boards of the Big Sister Association and Martha's Vineyard chapter of the NAACP. From 1996 to 2000, Tucker Underwood served as

president of the Boston Coalition of 100 Black Women. In 2019, she was honored by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women at the sixteenth annual Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts program, held in the Massachusetts State House.

Tucker Underwood resides with her mother in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. She has one adult daughter, Gretchen Mercer, and two grandsons, Brandon and Jason Mercer.

Gretchen Tucker Underwood was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 19, 2019.

Related Entries

Boston Latin Academy [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

The Cambridge School of Weston [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Southern Connecticut State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Boston State College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.A.

Jamaica Plain High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

William Lloyd Garrison Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

[STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Wilbur Cross High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1968 to 1970]

Social Studies Teacher

Brookline High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 197002 to ?]

Teacher

Brookline High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

METCO Coordinator

Brookline High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1996 to 2007]

Dean of Students

Dukes' County [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2014 to ?]

County Commissioner

Martha's Vineyard NAACP [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member, Executive Committee

Martha's Vineyard Youth Council Leadership Initiative [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Advising Member

100 Black Women of Boston [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

President Emeritus

Big Sister Association [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Former Member

Town of Wellesley [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Former Town Meeting Official

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Black School Educators [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Cottagers [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member