

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Mary Yearwood

PERSON

Yearwood, Mary, 1954-

Alternative Names: Mary Yearwood;

Life Dates: January 4, 1954-

Place of Birth: Barbados

Residence: New York, New York

Occupations: Archivist

Biographical Note

Archivist Mary Yearwood was born on January 14, 1954 in Barbados to Frederick and Una Yearwood. She attended St. Mary's Infant School, St. Mary's Junior School, and St. Leonard's Girls Secondary School. Yearwood moved with her family to Brooklyn, New York in 1969. After graduating from Abraham Lincoln High School in 1972, Yearwood received her B.A. degree in literature from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York in 1976. She went on to receive her M.L.S degree from Columbia University School of Library Service in 1981.

In 1975, while attending Brooklyn College, Yearwood worked as a page in the music division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. In 1977, she joined New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture as a technical assistant in the manuscripts, archives and rare books division. Upon receiving her M.L.S. degree, Yearwood was promoted to librarian in the manuscripts, archives and rare books division. From 1993 to 2017, she served as curator of the photographs and prints division, working extensively with the Morgan and Martin Smith, Austin Hanson, and Richard Saunders collections. She then became director of collections and information services in 2017. During her forty-three year career at the Schomburg Center, she curated the "St. Philip's Episcopal Church Bicentennial Exhibition" in 2009, "President Barack Obama: The First Year" in 2010, "Harlem Views/Diasporan Visions: The New Harlem Renaissance Photographers" in 2011, and "Curators' Choice: Black Life Matters" in 2016. Yearwood also stewarded collections from Malcom X and Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. She retired from the Schomburg Center in 2020.

In 2017, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio appointed Yearwood to the Archives, Reference and Research Advisory Board. Yearwood is also a member of the American Library Association. In 2016, Yearwood received the Leadership Award from the New

York Public Library.

Yearwood resides in New York City.

Mary Yearwood was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 24, 2019.

Related Entries

St. Mary's Infant School [STUDENTOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

St. Mary's Primary School [STUDENTOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

St. Leonard's Girls Secondary School [STUDENTOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

Abraham Lincoln High School [STUDENTOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

Brooklyn College [STUDENTOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

B.A.

Columbia University School of Library Service [STUDENTOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

M.L.S.

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts [EMPLOYEEOF]
[\[from 1955 to ?\]](#)

Page, Music Division

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture [EMPLOYEEOF]
[\[from 1992 to 1999\]](#)

Technical Assistant, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture [EMPLOYEEOF]
[\[from 1984 to 1998\]](#)

Librarian, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture [EMPLOYEEOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

Curator, Photographs and Prints Division

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture [EMPLOYEEOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

Director of Collections and Information Sciences

American Library Association [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member

Archives, Reference and Research Advisory Board [MEMBEROf]

[from 2017 to ?]

Appointed Member