

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Barry A. Mayo

PERSON

Mayo, Barry, 1952-

**Alternative Names:** Barry A. Mayo; Barry A. Mayo

**Life Dates:** June 30, 1952-

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

**Residence:** Stone Ridge, NY

**Occupations:** Broadcast Entrepreneur; Radio Program Director

## Biographical Note

A passionate music lover, Barry Mayo's early inspirations were the jazz and R&B albums his father played each evening on the family record player. Mayo has taken this love for African American music and shaped it into a broadcasting career of unprecedented success. His first exposure to the industry came during the 1970s while attending the School of Communications at Howard University. Mayo became the first general manager of WHBC, a position that rocketed him into a radio industry career.

Over a span of twenty years, Mayo served as program director in numerous markets across the nation, including Nashville, Tennessee; Norfolk, Virginia; and Little Rock, Arkansas. During this time, he exhibited a passion for music and marketing skill, which earned him several awards. More important, Mayo created a mix of musical genres and styles that has since become an industry standard because of its upbeat blend of jazz, R&B, funk and soul. In doing so, Mayo continued to reengineer the formats of stations in Chicago, New York and Detroit, bringing them and others to number one in their markets.

Mayo's reputation as an innovative radio programmer spread quickly throughout the industry and he was offered a position at one of the largest urban stations in the country, WRKS-FM (KISS-FM) in New York. Three years after joining the programming staff at KISS-FM, Mayo became vice president and general manager of this station. His place in the radio industry firmly set, Mayo decided to leave the station and become an entrepreneur. In 1988, he and a group of partners founded Broadcast Partners. Originally a five-station network, Broadcast Partners grew under Mayo's guidance into a twelve-station, publicly traded company with stations in Dallas, New York, Chicago and Charlotte. In 1995, Mayo sold his share of Broadcast Partners and founded Mayomedia, a media consulting firm specializing in urban markets.

In 1995, Mayo received the Entrepreneur of the Year Award from the National Black Programmers' Coalition and in 1996 received the Martin Luther King Legacy Award from the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago. Mayo is currently exploring a career as a photographer while spearheading the creation of the National Jazz Museum.

## Related Entries

**Queens College, City University of New York** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Howard University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**WHBC Radio** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1991 to 1995]

**General Manager**

**WRKS Radio** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 199807 to 200207]

**Vice President and General Manager**

**Broadcast Partners** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1988 to 1995]

**Co-Founder**

**Mayo Media** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1995 to ?]

**Founder**