

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Louis W. Sullivan

PERSON

Sullivan, Louis Wade, 1933-

Alternative Names: Dr. Louis W. Sullivan; Louis Wade Sullivan;

Life Dates: November 3, 1933-

Place of Birth: Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Residence: Atlanta, GA

Work: Atlanta, GA

Occupations: College President; Federal Cabinet Appointee

Biographical Note

Federal cabinet appointee and college president Dr. Louis Wade Sullivan was born on November 3, 1933, in Atlanta, Georgia, to Lubirda Priester and Walter Wade Sullivan. After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School, Sullivan received his B.S. degree in biology in 1954 from Morehouse College. He received his M.D. degree in 1958 from Boston University School of Medicine, completing his residency two years later at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center.

In 1960, Sullivan began a one-year pathology fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital, in Boston, before working at Boston City Hospital and studying hematology at Harvard Medical School's Thorndike Memorial Laboratory until 1963. He was hired as co-director of hematology at Boston University Medical Center in 1966 and he founded the Boston University Hematology Service in 1967.

In 1975, the Morehouse College Medical Education Program was founded and Sullivan returned to Atlanta to serve as its first dean and director. The Program became The School of Medicine at Morehouse College in 1978. In 1981, the School became independent and was re-named Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM)—the only predominantly black medical school in the United States established in the twentieth century—with Sullivan serving as its founding president and dean. In 1989, Sullivan left MSM to accept an appointment from President George H. W. Bush to serve as Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Sullivan returned to MSM in 1993 as president, becoming president emeritus in 2002.

In 1976, Sullivan became founding president of the Association of Minority Health

Professions Schools and, in 1985, he became one of the founders of Medical Education for South African Blacks, serving as chairman from 1994 to 2007. From 2001 until 2006, he served as co-chair of the White House Commission on HIV and AIDS. In 2003, he was appointed chair of the advisory committee of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Sullivan also has served as co-chairman of the Henry Schein Cares Foundation, chairman of the Washington, D.C.-based Sullivan Alliance to Transform the Health Professions, now a central program of the Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC), and on the boards of 3M, United Therapeutics, Emergent BioSolutions, General Motors, Cigna, Bristol Myers Squibb, and Equifax.

Sullivan has received more than seventy honorary degrees, including an honorary M.D. degree from the University of Pretoria in South Africa. He was the 2008 recipient of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award for Humanitarian Contributions to the Health of Humankind from the National Foundation for Infectious Disease.

Sullivan is the author of *The Morehouse Mystique: Becoming a Doctor at the Nation's Newest African American Medical School*, with MaryBeth Gasman (2012). His autobiography, *Breaking Ground: My Life in Medicine*, with David Chanoff (2014), won the NAACP Image Award for Literature in 2015.

Sullivan and his wife, E. Ginger Williamson Sullivan, live in Atlanta, Georgia. They have three children: Paul, Shanta, and Halsted.

Dr. Louis Wade Sullivan was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 21, 2002 and August 17, 2019.

Related Entries

Boston University School of Medicine [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.D.

Booker T. Washington High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

HS diploma

Morehouse College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Thorndike Memorial Laboratory Boston City Hospital [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1960 to 1963]

Research Fellow

New Jersey College of Medicine [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1964 to 1966]

Assistant professor

Boston University Medical Center [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1966 to 1975]

Co-director of Hematology

Morehouse College School of Medicine [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1975 to 1989]

President, Dean, Professor

United States Department of Health and Human Services [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1989 to 1993]

Secretary

Morehouse College School of Medicine [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1993 to 2002]

President, Dean, Professor

Association of Minority Health Professions Schools (AMHPS) [MEMBEROf]
[from 1976 to ?]

Founder

White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities [MEMBEROf]
[from 2003 to 2009]

Advisory Committee Member

National Health Museum [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Chair

United Therapeutics [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Sullivan Alliance to Transform the Health Professions [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Chair

President's Commission on HIV and AIDS [MEMBEROf]
[from 2001 to 2006]

Co-Chair

Grady Hospital Corporation [MEMBEROf]
[from 2008 to ?]

Board and Trustee Member

National Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Joint Committee on Health Policy of the Association of American Universities
[MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Medical Education for South African Blacks (MESAB) [MEMBEROF]
[from 1985 to ?]

Founder

Emergent BioSolutions [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

General Motors [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Cigna [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Equifax, Inc. [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member