

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ofield Dukes

PERSON

Dukes, Ofield, 1932-

Alternative Names: Ofield Dukes;

Life Dates: August 8, 1932-December 7, 2011

Place of Birth: Rutledge, Alabama, USA

Residence: Detroit, Michigan

Occupations: Political Consultant; Public Relations Chief Executive

Biographical Note

Public relations guru Ofield Dukes was born in Rutledge, Alabama, on August 8, 1932. After serving in the Army from 1952 to 1954, Dukes went on to Wayne State University in Detroit and graduated in 1958 with a degree in journalism.

After graduating, Dukes spent several years working at WCHB radio as the news director. In 1961, unable to get a job with any of the white-owned newspapers, Dukes went to work on The Michigan Chronicle. He found himself writing virtually all the articles, from editorials to politics, front-page news and music reviews. In 1964, Dukes won three awards for his writing from the National Newspaper Publishers Association, a Washington, D.C.-based organization of black-owned newspapers. Later that year, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him deputy director of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity & Plans for Progress. The following year, he became the deputy director of public affairs for the White House Conference to Fulfill These Rights, where he stayed until 1969. In addition to this, he was appointed to Vice President Hubert Humphrey's staff in 1966 as an assistant. Following Johnson's decision not to seek reelection in 1968 and Humphrey's loss in his bid for the White House, Dukes became disillusioned. In 1969, he established Ofield Dukes & Associates, a Washington-based public relations firm, with Motown Records as his first client. Today, they serve Sony Music Entertainment, RJR Nabisco and the Congressional Black Caucus, among others.

Between 1972 and 1983, Dukes served as an adjunct professor of public relations at Howard University, and since 1993 he has served in the School of Communications at the American University in the same capacity. He has been a communications consultant for every Democratic presidential campaign since 1972 and helped organize the first Congressional Black Caucus dinner. He is also the founder of the Black Public

Relations Society of Washington.

Dukes has won numerous awards over the years, including a Silver Anvil from the Public Relations Society of America in 1974 and a Gold Anvil in 2001. He has also been inducted into the Washington, D.C. Public Relations Society Hall of Fame.

Ofield Dukes passed away on December 7, 2011.

Related Entries

Sidney D. Miller Middle School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Wayne State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

WCHB Radio [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1983 to ?]

News Director

Michigan Chronicle [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1961 to ?]

Presidents' Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1964 to ?]

Deputy Director

White House Conference on Civil Rights [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1988 to 1996]

Deputy Director

Ofield Dukes & Associates [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1969 to ?]

Founder

Howard University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1999 to 2007]

Adjunct Professor

American University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1993 to ?]

Adjunct Professor

