

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with John Lassiter

PERSON

Lassiter, John, 1937-2005

Alternative Names: John Lassiter;

Life Dates: April 18, 1937-August 26, 2005

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Chicago, Illinois

Occupations: Financial Counselor; Insurance Executive

Biographical Note

Insurance executive and financial planner John Lassiter was born April 18, 1937, in Chicago, Illinois. Lassiter admired community businessmen and as a child wanted to be an actuary. Attending Betsy Ross Elementary School and graduating from Parker High School in 1954, Lassiter earned a B.S. degree in statistical economics from University of Illinois in 1959. He then went on to earn his CLU and ChFC degrees from American College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, in 1963 and 1969, respectively.

From 1959 to 1961, Lassiter worked as a statistician for the United States Department of Labor, and then served as a claims authorizer for the Social Security Administration from 1961 to 1963. Assisted by Benny Ross, Lassiter was one of the first African American executives hired by Prudential Insurance Company. In 1964 and 1965, Lassiter sold in excess of one million dollars of life insurance, and in 1968, he won the coveted Prudential President's Trophy for supervising the best sales force in the nation.

During the 1960s, Lassiter became active in CORE, the NAACP, Urban League, Operation Breadbasket and PUSH. He helped deliver tents and supplies to besieged civil rights workers in the South.

In 1984 Lassiter retired from Prudential and founded Lassiter Enterprises. He has obtained general agency contracts from most major insurance agencies including Prudential, Kemper, Travelers, and Guardian. Supported by certified public accountants, investment counselors, real estate advisors, attorneys, and risk managers, Lassiter marketed his financial services. On the boards of Trinity Hospital and Chicago Youth Centers, he also served on the presidential advisory committee of Chicago State University.

Mr. Lassiter died of prostate cancer on August 26, 2005; he was 68 years old. He leaves behind his wife, Rosielyn Lassiter.

Related Entries

Betsy Ross Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Paul Robeson High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

United States Department of Labor [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1975 to 1983]

Statistician

United States Social Security Administration [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1973 to 1974]

Claims Authorizer

Prudential Insurance Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1964 to 1984]

Lassiter Enterprises, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1984 to ?]

Founder

PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Head of Commercial Sales

South Chicago Hospital [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Congress for Racial Equality [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]