

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Allene Singho Roberts

PERSON

Roberts, Allene Singho, 1943-

Alternative Names: Allene Singho Roberts; Allene Carol Roberts

Life Dates: April 14, 1943-January 27, 2014

Place of Birth: New York, New York, USA

Work: Bronx, NY

Occupations: Model; Association Chief Executive

Biographical Note

Allene Singho Roberts was born Allene Singho on April 14, 1943 in Bronx, New York. Her father, longshoreman Albert Singho, was from Sri Lanka and her mother, Harriet Allie Franklin Singho, was raised in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen. Growing up in the Bronx and in Harlem, Roberts attended P.S. 10 and Paul Laurence Dunbar Junior High School. After graduating from Evander Childs High School in 1960, Roberts worked for three years as a claims administrator for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and studied modeling with Ophelia Devore.

The first black showroom model with Sloat and Company, she traveled internationally and worked with designers Rudi Gernreich, Oleg Cassini and Bill Blass. Roberts joined the Johnson Publishing Company's Ebony Fashion Fair in 1965 and toured with Audrey Smaltz, Richard Roundtree, Pat Cleveland, Beverly Simms and Janet Langhart. In 1967, Phillip Morris Companies hired Roberts and she worked in sales management, sales training and community relations. During this period, Roberts studied business administration at Bronx Community College and at the City University of New York's Baruch College. When she left Phillip Morris in 1992, Roberts was senior manager of corporate and government affairs. In 1996, Roberts served as chair and chief executive officer of the American Women's Forum for Economic Development Strategies. In 2001, Roberts co-founded the Bronx River Research Group and, with her husband Allen Roberts and John Besold, she founded Clean Energy Systems for New York (CESNY) three years later. Working in conjunction with local and state utilities and the United States Department of Energy's Rebuild America and Business Partner programs, CESNY provides schools and other public venues the services needed to design, install and maintain clean stationary power equipment.

Winner of many honors including the Harriet Tubman Award from the Coalition of

Black Trade Unionists and the New York Urban League Building Brick Award, Roberts serves on the boards of the Mid-Bronx Senior Citizens Council, the New York Coalition of 100 Black Women, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators' Corporate Roundtable, the National Association of Black County Officials' Business Roundtable, the Harlem YMCA Black Achievers in Industry and the New Professional Theatre.

Roberts passed away on January 27, 2014.

Related Entries

P.S. 10 [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Bronx Community College of the City University of New York [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Philip Morris Incorporated [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Sales Representative

Sloat and Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Model

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1960 to 1963]

Philip Morris Incorporated [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1967 to ?]

Special Promotions Representative

Bronx River Research Group [MEMBEROF]
[from 2000 to ?]

Founder