

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

PERSON

Britton, John H.

Alternative Names: John Britton; John H. Britton, Jr.;

Life Dates: July 21, 1937-

Place of Birth: Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Residence: Annapolis, MD

Occupations: Newspaper Editor

Biographical Note

Distinguished African American journalist and college administrator, John H. Britton, Jr., was born July 21, 1937, in Nashville, Tennessee, to Martha Parrish Britton, a school teacher, and John Henry Britton, Sr., a minister. He credits them with instilling in him lifelong strong values and religious principles. He graduated from Pearl High School in 1954, a few days after the U. S. Supreme Court's decision on Brown v. Board of Education. He enrolled in Lincoln University in Missouri, transferred after two years to the University of Michigan, and in 1958, he graduated from Drake University with a B.S. degree in journalism. In 1962, he earned an M.S. degree in journalism from Syracuse University in New York.

Britton moved to Atlanta, where he served as a reporter for the Atlanta Daily World. In 1962, he was hired by Jet magazine and worked there as an associate editor until 1966 when he went to work for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and later on the Ralph Bunche Civil Rights Documentation Project in Washington, D.C. In 1968, he returned to Jet magazine as managing editor. In 1971, Britton worked as a publicity manager with Motown Records, and then, in 1973, he was hired as director of public affairs with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington. He then moved to The Washington Post in 1976 to serve as public relations manager. In March 1978, Britton was hired as the director and then associate vice president for public affairs at the University of the District of Columbia, where he served for nineteen years.

In 1998, Britton returned to Nashville, Tennessee, as associate vice president for marketing and assistant to the president of Meharry Medical College. He continues to serve in the latter position. Throughout his career, he has served as a speechwriter and editorial consultant. Britton is married to Mrs. Cherrie Alvilda Dean Britton and is the stepfather of two adult sons. He and his first wife are the parents of one son, John H.

Britton III of Potomac, Maryland. A member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity since his undergraduate days at Lincoln University, Britton is also a member of the NAACP, and an associate member of the National Association of Black Journalists.

Britton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 5, 2005.

Related Entries

Carter-Lawrence School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Magnet High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Diploma

Lincoln University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Michigan [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Drake University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Bachelor's

Syracuse University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Master's

Carter Lawrence Elementary Math and Science Magnet School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Magnet High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Atlanta Daily World [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1958 to 1962]

Reporter

Jet Magazine [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1962 to 1966]

Reporter

United States Civil Rights Commission [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1966 to 1968]

Documenter

Jet Magazine [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1968 to 1971]

Managing Editor

Motown Records [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1971 to 1973]

Publicity Manager

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1973 to 1976]

Publicity Manager

Washington Post [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1976 to 1978]

Public Relations Manager

University of the District of Columbia [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1978 to 1997]

Public Relations

Bowie State University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1998 to 1998]

Public Relations

Meharry Medical College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1998 to ?]

Assistant to the president