

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lynn Jones Huntley

PERSON

Huntley, Lynn

Alternative Names: Lynn Jones Huntley;

Life Dates: January 24, 1946-August 30, 2015

Place of Birth: Petersburg, Virginia, USA

Work: Atlanta, GA

Occupations: Civil Rights Lawyer; Foundation Executive

Biographical Note

Activist attorney Lynn Jones Huntley was born on January 24, 1946, in Petersburg, Virginia, to theologian Lawrence Neale Jones and Mary Ellen Cooley Jones. Huntley began school in Baumholder, Germany, and later attended schools in Oberlin, Ohio, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New Haven Connecticut, and Nashville, Tennessee. Huntley entered college at Fisk University as an early entrant, and later earned her A.B. degree in sociology with honors from Barnard College. Huntley was the first African American female editor of the Columbia Law Review; she graduated cum laude from Columbia Law School with her J.D. degree in 1970.

After law school, Huntley clerked for Judge Constance Baker Motley in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. Joining the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in 1971, Huntley served as staff attorney and participated in the defense of prisoners involved in the Attica Prison uprising. Huntley also helped write the winning brief in *Furman v. Georgia*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court declared the death penalty to be cruel and unusual punishment within the meaning of the eighth and fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Huntley later secured executive clemency for noted human and prisoner rights activist Martin Sostre.

From 1973 to 1975, Huntley served as general counsel to the New York State Commission on Human Rights. In 1978, Huntley joined the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division where she served as Section Chief and acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General. From 1982 to 1995, Huntley worked at the Ford Foundation as Program Officer, and Deputy and Director of the Rights and Social Justice Program; the Program had a core biennial budget of \$44 million which funded efforts related to minority rights and opportunities; legal services for the poor; women's

rights, both domestic and international; minorities and communications; and Black church secular service delivery efforts.

In 1995, Huntley joined the Southern Education Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia, to direct the Comparative Human Relations Initiative; a study of race, poverty and inequality in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States. Huntley became the president of the Southern Education Foundation in 2002, the South's only African American lead and directed public charity, which focused on improving education for low income students, from preschool through higher education.

Huntley serves as a board member of the American Constitution Society, CARE USA, Grantmakers for Education, the Georgia Student Finance Commission, and the Interdenominational Theological Seminary. Huntley is the recipient of the first Thurgood Marshall Award from the Association of the Board of New York, and the Lucy Terry Prince Award of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights, among other honors. Huntley co-edited with Charles V. Hamilton and others *Beyond Racism: Embracing an Interdependent Future* in 2000, and *Beyond Racism: Race and Equality* in Brazil, South Africa and the United States in 2001.

Lynn Jones Huntley passed away on August 30, 2015, at the age of 69.

Related Entries

Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Magnet High School [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

H.S.

Fisk University [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

Barnard College [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Columbia Law School [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

J.D.

Cravath, Swaine & Moore [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1969 to 1969]

Summer Associate

United States District Court for the Southern District of New York [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1970 to 1971]

Law Clerk

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1971 to 1978]

Litigation

New York City Commission on Human Rights [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1975 to 1976]

United States Department of Justice [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1978 to 1982]

Special Litigation Attorney

Ford Foundation [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1982 to 1995]

Southern Education Foundation [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1995 to ?]

President

New York Bar Association [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

NAACP [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

CARE [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Women and Philanthropy [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member, Advisory Committee