

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Harriette Cole

PERSON

Cole, Harriette

Alternative Names: Harriette Cole;

Life Dates: March 14, 1961-

Place of Birth: Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Residence: New York, NY

Work: New York, NY

Occupations: Magazine Editor; Model

Biographical Note

Author and writer Harriette Cole was born on March 14, 1961 in Baltimore, Maryland. Her mother, Doris Freeland Cole, was an educator, and her father was the Honorable Harry A. Cole, Maryland's first African American Republican Assistant Attorney General and its elected State Senator and judge appointed to the Maryland's Court of Appeals.

Growing up in Baltimore, Maryland, Cole attended Dickey Hill Elementary School, Greenspring Junior High School and Western High School where she played the violin, sang in the choir and became interested in modeling. She graduated in 1979 and was accepted into the honors liberal arts program at Howard University where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude in 1983.

While at Howard University, Cole worked in retail and as a model. She participated in the Congressional Black Caucus fashion show which began her successful runway modeling career. Unsure of her career track, Cole first worked as a secretary on Capitol Hill after graduation. In late 1983, Cole left Washington, D.C. to accept a position at Essence magazine. During her eleven year tenure there, she held the positions of fashion director and lifestyle editor. Cole served as the founding editorial director of Uptown magazine and the editor of American Legacy Woman magazine.

In 1993, Cole wrote her first book, *Jumping the Broom: The African American Wedding Planner*, which is in its second edition. Cole has appeared on many national television and radio programs and in many major magazines and newspapers. She is a contributor to NBC's Today Show.

Cole is president and creative director of Harriette Cole Media, Inc. (formerly Profundities, Inc.), the life coaching, style and literary production company she founded in 1995. For nearly twenty years, Cole has offered media training services to a broad range of individuals and institutions. She has supported the development of artists for Universal Records, J Records, Motown, Warner Music and Def Jam and worked with entertainers including Queen Latifah, JoJo, Alicia Keys, Mary J. Blige, Erykah Badu, Tamar, Carl Thomas, Shontelle, Hal Linton, Cara Salimando and Neon Hitch.

Cole is a nationally syndicated columnist of “Sense and Sensitivity,” an etiquette and relationship management advice column targeting diverse audiences. Cole is also a bestselling author of seven books including *How to Be: A Guide to Living with Grace and Integrity* as well as the preeminent African-American Wedding Planner, *Jumping the Broom* and its sequel *Vows*, and *108 stitches: Words We Live By*. Cole serves on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Multicultural Audience Development Initiative.

During her tenure as creative director of *Ebony* magazine and then the added responsibility of editor in chief, Cole produced groundbreaking covers and features on President Obama, Michelle Obama, Michael Jackson and Prince. Cole co-executive produced a television special about the entertainer Prince that aired on The Africa Channel and was nominated for an NAACP Award.

In 2012, Cole introduced her line of hand-crocheted accessories, *108 stitches*, during New York Fashion Week.

Cole is married to fashion photographer George Chinsee, and they have one daughter.

Harriette Cole was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 7, 2006.

Related Entries

Dickey Hill Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Greenspring Junior High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Western High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Towson University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Howard University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

