

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with John B. Cruz III

PERSON

Cruz, John B., 1943-

Alternative Names: John B. Cruz III;

Life Dates: May 7, 1943-

Place of Birth: Wareham, Massachusetts, USA

Work: Roxbury, MA

Occupations: Construction Chief Executive

Biographical Note

Cruz Construction Company president John Bert Cruz, III, was born on May 7, 1943, in Wareham, Massachusetts. Cruz's parents, John B. Cruz, Jr., and Madeline Martin Cruz, were the children of first generation emigrants from the Cape Verde Islands, off the Northwest coast of Africa. Descended from whale harpooners, Cruz's grandfather John B. Cruz, Sr., was a prohibition era business associate of Joseph P. Kennedy. Living with his mother until he was twelve, Cruz attended school in Wareham, Massachusetts, Cleveland, Ohio and Buffalo, New York. Cruz worked alongside his father as a carpenter in Boston in 1956. Completing his studies at Patrick T. Campbell Junior High School, Cruz graduated from Boston Technical High School in 1962; he then enrolled in Wentworth Institute where he studied business administration.

Joining his father's carpentry business, Cruz took care of the administrative work as superintendent and estimator of jobs. Significant growth led to the two going into the general contracting business with the formation of John B. Cruz Construction Company in 1969. In 1970, Cruz was bonded and accepted his first general contracting job. Mentored by Dennis Blackett, Cruz completed Taurus Apartments, an affordable housing project in 1973. Attending the Minority Developers Executive Training Program of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cruz gained the acumen necessary to build over 1,500 units of housing and to specialize in build-to-suit projects. By 1983, Cruz was building between 300 and 400 units annually, managing a workforce of over 2,000, and managing apartments. The John B. Cruz Construction Company provided general contracting services for various Boston area projects including The Fortress, Council Towers, Massachusetts Biotechnology Research Institute Laboratory Research Institute, Boston Police Department Headquarters, Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center, Prang House, and Prang Estates. Cruz handled jobs as large as \$17 million as a general contractor and \$150 million working with other

companies; in 1989, he developed a \$36 million, 463 unit project.

As an active member of the Contractors Association of Boston and the National Association of Minority Contractors, Cruz joined with Smoot, Moody, McKissack and other black firms to fight for legislation to ensure parity for minority contractors. Cruz committed to helping Cape Verdean and other minority contractors to develop, and to staying and working in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Cruz also established the John B. Cruz Bridgewater State University Scholarship in his father's name.

Related Entries

Boston Technical High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Martin Luther King, Jr. K-8 Inclusion School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

The John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Wentworth Institute of Technology [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

John B. Cruz Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

President

Contractors Association of Boston [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

President

National Association of Minority Contractors [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

President