

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dorothy Terrell

PERSON

Terrell, Dorothy, 1945-

Alternative Names: Dorothy Terrell;

Life Dates: June 12, 1945-

Place of Birth: Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA

Residence: Miami Beach, FL

Occupations: Corporate Executive

Biographical Note

Corporate executive Dorothy Ann Terrell was born June 12, 1945 in Hallandale, Florida. Her parents, Pearlie Weeks Terrell and Charles Walter Terrell, sent her to Lanier Elementary School, Lanier Junior High School, and Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale. Aspiring to be a journalist, Terrell graduated from high school in 1963 and enrolled at Florida A&M University. Terrell graduated cum laude from Florida A&M University in 1966 with her B.A. degree in English.

After accepting a counseling position with Job Corps, Terrell moved to Poland Springs, Maine. In 1967, Terrell moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where she worked as a counselor for Reverend Leon Sullivan's Opportunities Industrial Corporation (OIC), and eventually rose to the position of assistant director. In 1973, Terrell joined the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office for Children, where she became the associate director in 1975. Serving on the advisory board of OIC brought Terrell into contact with representatives of the Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), who offered her a job as a training manager in 1976. From 1978 to 1980, Terrell was plant human relations manager in Westminister, Massachusetts. She later became group human relations manager of systems manufacturing from 1980 to 1983 and, from 1983 to 1984, served as group manager for engineering and manufacturing. In 1984, Terrell was promoted to plant manager of the DEC plant in Roxbury, Massachusetts. She was the first African American woman to hold this position. Primarily manufacturing keyboards, Terrell reduced the new product cycle from ninety days to seventy-five days and reduced manufacturing costs by more than 30%. Terrell also served as DEC's group manager of interconnect/packaging from 1987 to 1991. Terrell joined Sun Microsystems, Inc. in 1991 as president of Sun-Express, and as a corporate officer through 1997. At Sun Microsystems, she led the company in asset management performance and grew revenues to over \$300 million per year. After 1997, Terrell was served simultaneously

as senior vice president of worldwide sales for NMS Communications and president of Platform Services Group. Terrell temporarily left First Light Capital as a partner and became president and CEO of Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC), a national nonprofit organization that promotes economic prosperity in America's inner cities through private sector engagement with local residents. Terrell later returned to work for First Light Capital.

Terrell has been the recipient of many awards, including being named one of the Top 50 line managers in America by Executive Female magazine, a Top Ten Business Marketer by Business Marketing magazine, and one of 20 Women of Power and Influence by Black Enterprise magazine. She also received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Florida A&M University. Terrell was a subject in The Wizards and Their Wonders: Portraits in Computing, an exhibit and book by Christopher Morgan, as well as The Enterprising Woman by Mari Florence.

Terrell lives in Miami Beach, Florida.

Dorothy Terrell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 11, 2007 and March 9, 2017.

Related Entries

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

Lanier Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

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

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

SunExpress [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Initiative for a Competitive Inner City [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

President & CEO

Digital Equipment Corporation [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Job Corps [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Office for Children [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

White and Gold Honor Society [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Opportunities Industrialization Center [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

NMS Communications Corporation [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]