

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lillian Lambert

PERSON

Lambert, Lillian Lincoln, 1940-

Alternative Names: Lillian Lambert;

Life Dates: May 12, 1940-

Place of Birth: Powhatan, Virginia, USA

Residence: Richmond, VA

Occupations: Entrepreneur

Biographical Note

Entrepreneur Lillian Lincoln Lambert was born on May 12, 1940 in Ballsville, Virginia to Willie D. Hobson, a farmer and Arnetha B. Hobson, a school teacher and homemaker. Lambert graduated from Pocahontas High School in Powhatan, Virginia in 1958. Her mother, a college graduate, urged Lambert to pursue an advanced degree, but she wanted to move to New York City instead. She worked as a maid on Fifth Avenue, a typist at Macy's Department Store and a travelling saleswoman. Lambert then moved to Washington, D.C. in 1961, where she worked for the federal government as a typist in the Veteran Affairs Division and later with the Peace Corps while going to school at the District of Columbia Teacher's College (now the University of the District of Columbia). In 1962, Lambert enrolled as a full-time student at Howard University at the age of twenty-two. Under the mentorship of Professor H. Naylor Fitzhugh, she majored in Business Administration and applied to Harvard Business School. Lambert graduated from Howard University in 1966 with her B.A. degree in business administration and started Harvard Business School in 1967. At Harvard Business School, she worked with four other black students to increase the number of African American enrollments and in 1968, they founded the African American Student Union. Lambert graduated in 1969 and was the first African American woman to receive her M.B.A. degree from Harvard Business School.

Lambert was then hired at the Sterling Institute in Washington, D.C. and later as a manager at the National Bankers Association. In 1972, Lambert joined Ferris & Company as a stockbroker. In 1973, she began teaching at Bowie State College and became the executive vice president of Unified Services, a janitorial services company. Then in 1976, Lambert left Unified Services to start her own janitorial company, Centennial One, Inc. Starting in her garage, she grew Centennial into a business with more than 1,200 employees and \$20 million in sales. In 2001, Lambert sold her

company and in 2002, she became president of LilCo Enterprises. She now serves as a coach, consultant and public speaker.

Lambert is the recipient of numerous awards including the Small Business Person of the Year for the State of Maryland in 1981 and the Harvard Business School Alumni Achievement Award in 2003, the school's highest honor for its alumni. She has served on the board of visitors for Virginia Commonwealth University, the board of regents for the University System of Maryland, the board of directors for the African American Alumni Association of Harvard Business School and committee vice chair for the Manasota Chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Lambert is married to John Anthony Lambert, Sr. and has two adult daughters, Darnetha and Tasha.

Lillian Lincoln Lambert was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 9, 2012.

Related Entries

Pocahontas Middle [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

High School Diploma

Howard University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Harvard Business School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

MBA

Unified Services [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1972 to 1976]

Executive Vice President

Bowie State University [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1989 to ?]

Instructor

Centennial One, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1989 to ?]

Founder and President

LilCo Enterprises [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1975 to ?]

President - Professional Speak, coach & consultant

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Committee Chair, Board Member

Harvard Business School African American Alumni Association [MEMBEROF]

[from 2010 to ?]

Board Member

Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) [MEMBEROF]

[from 2002 to ?]

Committee Vice Chair

St. Peter Baptist Church [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Metropolitan Business League [MEMBEROF]

[from 1992 to 2000]

Board Chair

Kiwanis International [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Building Service Contractors Association [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

President Committee Chair

First Baptist Church of North Brentwood Maryland [MEMBEROF]

[from 2002 to 2002]

Prince George's Chamber of Commerce [MEMBEROF]

[from 2001 to 2005]

Committee Chair

DC Chamber of Commerce [MEMBEROF]

[from 2001 to 2002]