

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin

PERSON

**Sprinkle-Hamlin, Sylvia, 1945-**

**Alternative Names:** Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin;

**Life Dates:** April 25, 1945-January 3, 2022

**Place of Birth:** Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA

**Residence:** Pfafftown, NC

**Occupations:** Arts Administrator; Librarian

## Biographical Note

Librarian and arts administrator Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin was born on April 25, 1945, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to Thelma N. Holtzclaw, a custodian, and Arthur William Henry Sprinkle, Jr., a factory worker. She received her B.S. degree in education from Winston-Salem State University in 1967 and her M.S. degree in library science from Clark Atlanta University in 1968.

After completing her studies, Sprinkle-Hamlin joined the staff of the Free Library of Philadelphia as a children's librarian. In 1970, she became an information specialist at the Benjamin Banneker Urban Center, and in 1973, she became the instructional media center director for the Philadelphia Public Schools while taking education administration classes at Cheyney State University. Sprinkle-Hamlin returned to Winston-Salem State University in 1978, where she served as a public services librarian and assistant director of the university library. In 1979, she joined the Forsyth County Public Library system as department head for children's outreach. Also in 1979, Sprinkle-Hamlin met her future husband, Larry Leon Hamlin, who was the founder of the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. They married in 1981 and Sprinkle-Hamlin became secretary of the National Black Repertory Company in 1983. Hamlin would go on to found the National Black Theatre Festival in 1989, with the fundraising support of Maya Angelou. Sprinkle-Hamlin joined the board of directors for the National Black Theatre Festival in 1991. The Festival grew from thirty performances and 10,000 in attendance in 1989 to over 100 performances and 50,000 in attendance in 2005. In 2007, Hamlin died after an extended illness and Sprinkle-Hamlin carried on her husband's work, becoming executive producer for the National Black Theatre Festival. In 2010, she became president of the board of directors for the North Carolina Black Repertory Company. During this time, Sprinkle-Hamlin also continued to work for the Forsyth County Public Library, serving as assistant library director, extension

division, associate library director, and finally library director in 2000. She also served as a library consultant for W.H. Roberts & Associates.

Sprinkle-Hamlin worked extensively in the Winston-Salem community, serving on the board of directors for Family Services, Inc., Forsyth County Smart Start, the Shepherd Center of Greater Winston-Salem, and the Diggs Gallery of Winston-Salem University. She also served as a council member of the American Library Association (ALA), president of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, a Public Library Association Board member, and chair of the African American Issues Roundtable of the Southeastern Library Association. Sprinkle-Hamlin received the Roundtable for Ethnic Minority Roadbuilder's Award, the DEMCO/ALA Black Caucus Award for Excellence in Librarianship, and The Chronicle Women of the Year Award. She lived in Pfafftown, North Carolina.

Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 23, 2012.

Sprinkle-Hamlin passed away on January 3, 2022, at the age of 76.

## Related Entries

**Winston-Salem State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.S.**

**Clark Atlanta University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.S.**

**Carter High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**North Carolina Black Repertory Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board President**

**Free Library of Philadelphia** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1968 to 1970]

**Children's Librarian**

**Benjamin Banneker Urban Center** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to 1973]

**Information Specialist**

**Fashion Two-Twenty Cosmetics** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1977 to 1984]

**Owner**

**Winston-Salem State University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1978 to 1979]

**Associate Director/ Public Service Librarian**

**Forsyth County Public Library** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1979 to 1980]

**Departmental Head, Children's Outreach**

**Forsyth County Public Library** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1980 to 1984]

**Associate Director, Extension Division**

**Forsyth County Public Library** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1984 to 1999]

**Associate Library Director**

**W.H. Roberts & Associates** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1989 to 2000]

**Consultant**

**Forsyth County Public Library** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2000 to ?]

**Library Director**

**Highsmith Library Innovative Committee** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Chair**

**American Library Association** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Chair of the Affiliate/Chapters Committee**

**Public Library Association** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Executive Board Member**

**Southeastern Library Association** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 2010 to ?]

**Chair of African American Issues Roundtable**

**North Carolina Library Association** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 2010 to ?]

**Director of Roundtable for Ethnic Minority Concerns**

**American Library Association** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 1998 to 2005]

**President**

**American Library Association** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 2008 to ?]

**Council Member**

**National Black Theater Festival** [MEMBEROf]

[from 2006 to 2007]

**Executive Producer**

**Family Services, Inc.** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Board of Directors**

**Forsyth County Smart Start** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Advisory Board**

**Salem College Center for Women Writers** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1977 to 1997]

**Board of Directors**

**Sheperd Center of Greater Winston-Salem** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1997 to ?]

**Board of Directors**

**Winston Salem University, Diggs Gallery** [MEMBEROF]

[from 2003 to 2005]

**Board of Directors**

**Forsyth County Employees Credit Union** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

**Board of Directors**

**Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Council on the Status of Women** [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]