

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lalita Tademy

PERSON

Tademy, Lalita

**Alternative Names:** Lalita Tademy;

**Life Dates:** December 26, 1948-

**Place of Birth:** Berkeley, California, USA

**Residence:** Menlo Park, CA

**Occupations:** Author

## Biographical Note

Author and corporate executive Lalita Tademy was born in 1948 in Berkeley, California to Nathan Green Tademy, Jr. and Willie Dee Billes. She was the youngest of four siblings, including two older sisters, Theodorsia and Joan, and an older brother, Lee. In 1956, her family moved to Castro Valley, California, where her father worked as a contractor. She attended A.B. Morris Junior High School and Castro Valley High, where she was a National Merit Scholar. In 1964, Tademy was accepted at Howard University in Washington, D.C. with a full academic scholarship. Two years later, she transferred to the University of California at Los Angeles. Tademy graduated with her B.S. degree in psychology in 1970 and in 1972, she earned her M.B.A. degree from the Graduate School of Management at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Tademy worked for the Bay Area Rapid Transit, Memorex Corporation, and ITT's printer company, Qume. In 1985, she helped found ALPS America, a unit of Japan's ALPS Electric Company, where she was in charge of marketing high-performance dot-matrix printers. Tademy was hired as Vice President and General Manager of Sun Microsystems in Silicon Valley in 1992. In 1995, she quit her executive position to pursue other passions. Tademy researched her family history intensively for three years before deciding to write a novel. In 2001, her first novel, *Cane River*, was published to much acclaim and was featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show. The book chronicled the lives of her maternal ancestors. In 2007, she published her second novel, *Red River*, whose content was also drawn from her family history research.

Tademy was featured in *Fortune*'s "People on the Rise" column and *Ebony*'s "Speaking of People" feature in 1989, and in 1998, she was named as African American Innovator in the New Millennium at the Silicon Valley Tech Museum of Innovation. In 2001, *Cane River* was chosen as part of Oprah's Book Club Series, and became a New York

Times bestseller. Red River was selected as Border's Interactive Book Club Pick in 2007 and as an Essence Book Club Pick in 2008. Tademy lives with her husband, corporate executive Barry Williams, in Menlo Park, California.

Lalita Tademy was interviewed by the The HistoryMakers on November 7, 2012.

## Related Entries

**Longfellow Middle School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Parsons Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Castro Valley High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Howard University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**University of California, Los Angeles** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**University of California, Los Angeles** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**M.B.A.**

**Xerox Corporation** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1972 to 1973]

**Sales**

**Philip Morris Incorporated** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1973 to 1974]

**Marketing**

**Bay Area Rapid Transit** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1974 to ?]

**Marketing**

**Memorex Corporation** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1978 to 1981]

**Marketing**

**ITT Qume** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1972 to ?]

**Marketing Manager**

**ALPS Electric** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1981 to ?]

**Vice President and General Manager**

**Sun Microsystems** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1992 to 1995]

**Vice President and General Manager**

**Self Employed** [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1956 to 1957]

**Author**