

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert F. Smith

PERSON

Smith, Robert F., 1962-

**Alternative Names:** Robert F. Smith;

**Life Dates:** December 1, 1962-

**Place of Birth:** Denver , Colorado, USA

**Residence:** Austin, TX

**Work:** Austin, TX

**Occupations:** Private Equity Chief Executive

## Biographical Note

Investment chief executive Robert Frederick Smith was born on December 1, 1962 in Denver, Colorado to educators Dr. William Robert Smith and Dr. Sylvia Myrna Smith. Smith attended Carson Elementary School and Gove Jr. High School in Denver. He then graduated from Denver East High School in 1981 and Cornell University with his B.S. degree in chemical engineering in 1986. He worked as an engineer for Air Products and Chemicals, The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and Kraft General Foods. Smith was the principal inventor on two United States and two European patents. Smith received his M.B.A. degree with a concentration in finance and marketing from Columbia Business School in 1994.

After business school, Smith joined Goldman Sachs in mergers and acquisitions department in New York and then moved to San Francisco in 1997 to initiate Goldman Sachs' merger and acquisition efforts there. As co-head of Enterprise Systems and Storage, he oversaw \$50 billion in merger and acquisition activity with the following companies: Apple, Microsoft, Texas Instruments, eBay and Yahoo. Smith left Goldman Sachs in 2000 to found his own company, Vista Equity Partners LLC. In 2015, the HEC-Dow Jones Private Equity Performance Ranking named Vista Equity Partners LLC as one of the industry's top performers.

Smith was a member of the Leadership Circle for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial and an active supporter of the organization Children's Opportunities for Music Participation. He was also Chairman of the Board of the Robert F. Kennedy Center, a member of the Cornell Engineering College Council, a trustee at Columbia Business School, trustee of the Boys and Girls Clubs in San Francisco, and a board member of

Carnegie Hall. Smith also received honorary doctorates from American University and Huston-Tillotson University.

Smith received the Reginald F. Lewis Achievement Award, the Ripple of Hope Award from the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Robert Toigo Foundation, the Award of Excellence from the National Association of Investment Companies, and the Columbia University BBSA Distinguished Alumni Award. Smith, a well known philanthropist, donated \$30 million to the National Museum of African American History and Culture and \$50 million to Cornell University.

Smith and his wife, Hope Dworaczyk, have one son, Hendrix Robert Smith, and he has three children, Zoe Suzanne Smith, Eliana Frederick Smith and Maximos Robert Smith, from a prior marriage.

Robert F. Smith was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 10, 2015.

## Related Entries

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

**Gove Junior High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

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

**Diploma**

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

**BS**

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

**MBA**

**Air Products and Chemicals** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Engineer**

**The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Kraft General Foods** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Fund II Foundation** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**President & Founding Director**

**Project Realize** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Founder**

**Goldman, Sachs & Co.** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1997 to 2000]

**Co-Head of Enterprise Systems and Storage**

**Vista Equity Partners, LLC** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2000 to ?]

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Robert F. Kennedy Center** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Chairman of the Board**

**Cornell Engineering Council** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**Columbia Business School** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Trustee**

**Boys & Girls Club of San Francisco** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Trustee**

**Carnegie Hall** [MEMBEROf]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board Member**