

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Henry W. McGee

PERSON

McGee, Henry W.

Alternative Names: Henry W. McGee;

Life Dates: January 22, 1953-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: New York, New York

Work: Boston, Massachusetts

Occupations: Professor; Broadcast Executive

Biographical Note

Broadcast executive Henry W. McGee was born on January 22, 1953 in Chicago, Illinois to Henry McGee Jr. and Catherine Williams. At the age of sixteen, McGee moved with his father to Los Angeles, California, and attended Palisades High School in Pacific Palisades, California until his junior year when he received early admission to Harvard University. McGee earned his B.A. degree in social studies magna cum laude in 1974. Later he received his M.B.A. degree from Harvard Business School in 1979.

McGee worked as a writer for Newsweek from 1974 to 1977 in New York and Washington D.C. After he obtained his M.B.A. degree, he was hired as a manager of film acquisition for Home Box Office (HBO), which was then a new venture at Time, Inc. McGee went on to serve as director of program acquisition for Time-Life Films from 1980 to 1981, director of Cinemax Program Planning and HBO Family Programming from 1981 to 1983, director of HBO Enterprises from 1983 to 1985, vice president of home video from 1985 to 1988, and senior vice president of programming for HBO Video from 1988 to 1995. In March of 1995, McGee was promoted to president of HBO Home Entertainment. Under his leadership, HBO became the leading force in the TV-to-DVD industry and a pioneer in using the Internet for marketing and sales. After retiring from HBO in 2013, McGee joined the faculty of Harvard Business School as a senior lecturer.

In 2004, McGee was elected to the board of AmerisourceBergen, the global pharmaceutical services company, and in 2017 was named chairman of the company's Governance and Nominating Committee. In 2015, he joined the board of TEGNA, Inc., a broadcast and digital media company that owns the largest number of affiliates of the

NBC television network. McGee also served on several nonprofit boards, including as director of the Black Filmmaker Foundation board since 1985, and the Pew Research Center board since 2014. He also served as director and president of the Film Society of Lincoln Center board, and the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Foundation board. He served as a director of the boards of the Save the Children Fund, the Time Warner Foundation, Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Sundance Institute. Additionally, McGee served on the advisory board of Harvard University's Hutchins Center for African & African American Research.

McGee was inducted into Variety's Home Entertainment Hall of Fame, and the National Association of Minorities in Communication Hall of Fame. He also received the Professional Achievement Award from the Harvard Business School African American Alumni Association, and was named by Black Enterprise as one of the "50 Most Powerful African Americans in the Entertainment Business." In 2018 the National Association of Corporate Directors named McGee one of the 100 most influential people in the boardroom community.

McGee and his wife, Celia, have one daughter, Honor.

Henry W. McGee was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 22, 2016.

Related Entries

Washington Dual Language Academy [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

N/A

Alain L Locke Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

N/A

Horace Mann School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

N/A

Palisades Charter High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Harvard University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

B.A. degree

Harvard Business School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

M.B.A.

Tolleston Middle School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

HBO [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Manager, Film Acquisition

GE Asset Management [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 201501 to ?]

Consultant

HBO Home Entertainment [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 199503 to 201403]

President

Harvard Business School [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 201407 to ?]

Senior Lecturer

Newsweek [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1974 to ?]

Reporter, New York Bureau

Newsweek [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1975 to 1977]

Reporter, Washington Bureau

Time-Life Films [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1980 to 1981]

Director, Program Acquisition

Cinemax Program Planning and HBO Family Programming [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1981 to 1983]

Director

HBO Enterprises [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1983 to 1985]

Director

HBO [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1985 to 1988]

Vice President

HBO Video [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1988 to 1995]

Senior Vice President, Programming

Quickflix [MEMBEROf]
[from 201205 to 201211]

Board Member

TEGNA, Inc. [MEMBEROf]
[from 201507 to ?]

Board Member

AmerisourceBergen [MEMBEROF]
[from 200411 to ?]

Board Member

Black Filmmaker Foundation [MEMBEROF]
[from 1985 to ?]

Director

Studio Museum in Harlem [MEMBEROF]
[from 1986 to 1992]

Director

Film Society of Lincoln Center [MEMBEROF]
[from 1990 to 2013]

Director

Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Foundation [MEMBEROF]
[from 1992 to 1995]

Director

New 42nd Street [MEMBEROF]
[from 1992 to 1996]

Director

Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Foundation [MEMBEROF]
[from 1995 to 2013]

President

Radcliffe College [MEMBEROF]
[from 1996 to 1999]

Trustee

Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce [MEMBEROF]
[from 1997 to ?]

Fellow

Film Society of Lincoln Center [MEMBEROF]
[from 1999 to 2004]

President

Sundance Institute [MEMBEROF]
[from 1999 to 2004]

Director

Hutchins Center for African & African American Research [MEMBEROF]
[from 2000 to ?]

Advisory Board Member

National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences [MEMBEROF]
[from 2003 to ?]

Member

Digital Entertainment Group [MEMBEROF]
[from 2005 to 2013]

Director

The Public Theater [MEMBEROF]
[from 2011 to 2013]

Director

Save The Children [MEMBEROF]
[from 2012 to 2013]

Director

Time Warner Foundation [MEMBEROF]
[from 2012 to 2013]

Director

Film Society of Lincoln Center [MEMBEROF]
[from 2013 to ?]

President Emeritus

Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Foundation [MEMBEROF]
[from 2013 to ?]

President Emeritus

Pew Research Center [MEMBEROF]
[from 2014 to ?]

Director

Museum of Fine Arts [MEMBEROF]
[from 2014 to ?]

Board of Overseers