

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Peter Blair Henry

PERSON

Henry, Peter Blair

Alternative Names: Peter Blair Henry;

Life Dates: July 30, 1969-

Place of Birth: Kingston, Jamaica

Residence: New York, NY

Work: New York, NY

Occupations: Economist; Business School Dean Emeritus

Biographical Note

Economist and academic administrator Peter Blair Henry was born on July 30, 1969 in Kingston, Jamaica to George Henry and Carroll Henry. After moving to Wilmette, Illinois with his family at age nine, Henry attended New Trier High School. He earned his B.A. degree with distinction and highest honors in economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1991. A Rhodes Scholar, Henry graduated from Oxford University with his B.A. degree in mathematics in 1993, and went on to receive his Ph.D. degree in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1997.

Henry worked as a consultant to the Governor of The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank in 1994. The following year, he worked as a consultant to the Governor of the Bank of Jamaica. In 1997, Henry became an assistant professor of economics at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business. He was promoted to associate professor of economics with tenure in 2005, becoming the first tenured African American professor at the Graduate School of Business. He obtained a full professorship in 2007, and was named the Konosuke Matsushita Professor of International Economics in 2008. That same year, he led the external economic advisory group for then-Senator Barack Obama's presidential campaign. After the election, Henry served on President Obama's transition team as leader of the review of international lending agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and was appointed to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships the following year. In 2010, Henry became the first African American dean, and the youngest dean, of New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business. He served in the position for eight years, becoming Dean Emeritus in 2018 and continuing as William R. Berkley Professor of Economics and Finance.

In 2013, Henry released his first book, Turnaround: Third World Lessons for First World Growth. Henry also published numerous articles on international economics, including “Debt Relief,” with Serkan Arslanalp, in the Journal of Economic Perspectives (2006); “Capital Account Liberalization: Theory, Evidence, and Speculation” in the Journal of Economic Literature (2007); and “Institutions vs. Policies: A Tale of Two Islands,” with Conrad Miller, in the American Economic Review (2009). Henry was named to the Citigroup Board of Directors in 2015 and the Board of Directors of Nike in 2018. He also served on the Board of Directors of General Electric from 2016 to 2018.

In 2014, with support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Henry established the Ph.D. Excellence Initiative, a post-baccalaureate program designed to address underrepresentation in economics by mentoring exceptional students of color interested in pursuing doctoral studies in the field.

Henry and his wife, Lisa J. Nelson, have four children.

Peter Blair Henry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 29, 2016 and January 18, 2017.

Related Entries

Avoca West Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Attended: 3rd through 4th Grade

Marie Murphy School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

New Trier Township High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

High School Diploma

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A. with Distinction and Highest Honors

University of Oxford [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

New York University, Leonard N. Stern School of Business [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2010 to ?]

Dean; William R. Berkley Prof. of Economics & Finance

Stanford University, Graduate School of Business [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 200804 to 201001]

Konosuke Matsushita Prof. of International Finance

Stanford University, Graduate School of Business [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 200207 to 200506]

Associate Professor of Economics

Stanford University, Graduate School of Business [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 200507 to 200706]

Associate Professor of Economics (with tenure)

Stanford University, Graduate School of Business [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 200707 to 200803]

Professor of Economics

Stanford University, Graduate School of Business [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 199709 to 200206]

Assistant Professor of Economics

Stanford University, School of Humanities and Sciences [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 200709 to 201001]

Professor of Economics (by courtesy)

President's Commission on White House Fellowships [MEMBEROf]
[from 2009 to 2017]

Commissioner

National Bureau of Economic Research [MEMBEROf]
[from 2010 to ?]

Board of Directors

Kraft Foods Group [MEMBEROf]
[from 2011 to 2015]

Board of Directors

Council on Foreign Relations [MEMBEROf]
[from 2012 to ?]

Board of Directors

Economic Club of New York [MEMBEROf]
[from 2014 to ?]

Board of Directors

Citigroup [MEMBEROf]
[from 2015 to ?]

Board of Directors

General Electric [MEMBEROf]
[from 201607 to ?]

Board of Directors