

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Richard Washington

PERSON

Washington, Richard, 1940-

Alternative Names: Richard Washington;

Life Dates: February 20, 1940-

Place of Birth: Everett , Massachusetts, USA

Residence: Tisbury, Massachusetts

Occupations: Stuntman ; Stunt Coordinator

Biographical Note

Stuntman and stunt coordinator Richard Washington was born on February 20, 1940 in Everett, Massachusetts to Edna Ford and Edward Washington. He graduated from Christian High School in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1957 and attended Los Angeles City College in Los Angeles, California.

Washington worked as a machinist and commercial diver before beginning his career in film in 1968. He earned his first film credit as a stuntman in 1971 for the film, Dirty Harry. By 1973, Washington secured a role as a stunt coordinator, choreographing stunts in films. He worked on a number of Blaxploitation films during the 1970s, including *Scream*, *Blacula Scream*, *Cleopatra Jones*, *Dr. Black*, *Mr. Hyde*, and *Sheba Baby*. Washington's film credits also include; *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*, *Conquest for the Planet of the Apes*, *Interspace*, *The Abyss*, *The Goonies*, *U.S. Marshalls* and *Die Hard with a Vengeance*. Washington also played KITT in *Knight Rider* and worked alongside Richard Pryor and Cecily Tyson as the stunt coordinator for *Bustin' Loose* and *Some Kind of Hero*. In 1974, Washington doubled for Richard Roundtree and later for Billy Dee Williams. Washington's other major film credits include; *Mississippi Burning* and *Glory*. Washington also served as a stunt double multiple times for Lou Gossett, most notably in *The Deep*, when he demonstrated his talent for underwater stunts. He retired in 1997.

During his career as a Hollywood stunt performer, Washington was active in the Black Stuntmen's Association, where he and other members fought against the discriminatory practice of "painting down" white stuntmen in black makeup to double for African American actors. He later joined the Stuntmen's Association of Motion Pictures in 1973, as African American stuntmen began being admitted to the organization. Washington was among the first African American stuntmen to work in Hollywood,

and his accomplishments were recognized in an exhibit about the Black Stuntmen's Association in the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Washington, an avid sailor, was the first black commodore of a major Los Angeles yacht club and has participated in numerous races in Antigua, St. Lucia and over twenty-five times in the Bequia Easter Regatta.

Washington and his wife, Carol Washington, have two daughters. Their daughter, Kym Washington-Longino, also pursued a career as a stuntwoman.

Richard Washington was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 15, 2017.

Related Entries

Los Angeles City College [STUDENTOF]
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