

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell

PERSON

Cordell, LaDoris H.

Alternative Names: The Honorable LaDoris Cordell;

Life Dates: November 19, 1949-

Place of Birth: Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, USA

Residence: Palo Alto, CA

Occupations: Judge

Biographical Note

Judge LaDoris Cordell was born on November 19, 1949 in Ardmore, Pennsylvania to Clara Beatrice Jenkins and Lewis Randall Hazzard. Cordell earned her B.A. degree in drama from Antioch College in 1971, and her J.D. degree from Stanford University in 1974.

Cordell opened the Law Office of LaDoris Hazzard Cordell in East Palo Alto, California. In 1978, she became the assistant dean for student affairs at Stanford University's Law School. Cordell was appointed to the Municipal Court of Santa Clara County by Governor Jerry Brown in 1982. During her time on the Municipal Court, Cordell spent three months as justice pro tem for the State Court of Appeal, Sixth District. In 1988, Cordell won an election to the Superior Court of Santa Clara County, making her the first African American woman to sit on a Superior Court in Northern California. She remained on the court until 2001. Cordell was then hired as vice provost and special counselor to the president for campus relations at Stanford University. In 2003, she was elected to a four-year term on the Palo Alto City Council. Cordell retired from her position at Stanford in 2009 and was appointed as an independent police auditor by the City of San Jose the following year. She remained in that position until 2015. Cordell then served on a Blue Ribbon Panel that reviewed the operations of the San Francisco Police Department. In 2017, she was chosen to be the presiding judge on the television show, "You the Jury."

Cordell received many awards for her community involvement and judicial career. She was the recipient of the Silicon Valley NAACP's William E.B. Dubois Award, the Iola Williams Public Service Award, and the National Council of Negro Women's Public Service Award. Cordell also received the Social Justice Award from the Legal Advocates for Children & Youth and the Rose Bird Memorial Award from the

California Women Lawyers.

During her career, Cordell was involved with the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children, United Way of Santa Clara County, Community Working Group, Inc., Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, the San Francisco Family Violence Project, and the East Palo Alto Art & Music Project, among many others. She also co-founded the African American Composer Initiative in 2014.

Cordell and her partner, Florence Keller, have two daughters, Cheran Denis Cordell and Starr Lynn Cordell.

LaDoris Hazzard Cordell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 28, 2017.

Related Entries

Antioch College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Stanford Law School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Private Practice [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1976 to 1982]

Lawyer

Stanford Law School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1978 to 1982]

Assistant Dean

Municipal Court [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1982 to 1988]

Judge

Superior Court [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1988 to 2001]

Judge

Stanford University [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2001 to 2009]

Vice Provost

CBS [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2003 to 2017]

Legal Analyst

City of San Jose [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2010 to 2015]

Police Auditor

American Law Institute [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Member