

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Adena Williams Loston

PERSON

Loston, Adena Williams, 1952-

Alternative Names: Adena Williams Loston;

Life Dates: November 13, 1952-

Place of Birth: Vicksburg, Mississippi, Warren County

Work: San Antonio, TX

Occupations: Academic Administrator; University President

Biographical Note

Academic administrator Adena Williams Loston was born on November 13, 1952 in Vicksburg, Mississippi to Frances Pearline Miller Williams and Tommie Lee Williams, Sr. Loston received her B.S. degree from Alcorn State University in Claiborne County, Mississippi in 1973. She then earned both her M.S. degree in education and her Ph.D. degree in education administration and supervision from Bowling Green University in Bowling Green, Ohio in 1974 and 1979, respectively. She also completed postgraduate work at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Business School, Oxford University, and Harvard University.

Loston began her career in education as an instructor at Arkansas State University in 1974. Later, she taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston from 1980 to 1981, as an instructor at Houston Community College from 1979 to 1981, an adjunct assistant professor at Texas Southern University from 1984 to 1986, and an associate professor at Georgia State University 1988 to 1989. Loston also supervised the office occupations program at Houston Community College from 1982 to 1988. In 1989, Loston began working at Santa Monica College in California as the dean of professional programs; and she also served as its dean of vocational education, budgets, and facilities from 1989 to 1993. Loston then served as the executive dean and provost of the El Paso County Community College District at the Transmountain and Valle Verde campuses. From 1997 to 2002, Loston was the president of San Jacinto College South in Houston. She became the chief education officer associate administrator at NASA headquarters in Washington, D.C. in 2002, and later served as director of education and special assistant for suborbital and special orbital projects at the Goddard Space Flight Center in 2005. In 2007, Loston was appointed as president of St. Philip's College in San Antonio, Texas.

Loston received numerous awards and accolades over the course of her career, including NASA's Outstanding Leadership Medal and Exceptional Achievement Medal, the Daisy Bates Education Advocacy Award from the NAACP, and the W.E.B. DuBois Higher Education Award from the National Alliance of Black School Educators. She was also the recipient of an honorary doctorate in science from Wiley University, and was inducted into the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame in 2009. In 2010, Loston became an advisory board member of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Financing Advisory Board. She also served on the American Council on Educational Inclusion Commission. Loston as NASA's chief education officer was responsible for the Educator Astronaut Program, the NASA Explorer Schools and NASA Explorer Institutes.

Loston has one son, Gilbert Williams Loston III.

Adena Williams Loston was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 4, 2018.

Related Entries

Alcorn State University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Bowling Green State University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Harvard University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Certificate

Rosa A. Temple High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Diploma

Arkansas State University [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1974 to 1976]

Instructor

Southwestern Bell Telephone [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1976 to 1977]

Supervisor

Houston Independent School District [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1977 to 1977]

Teacher

University of Houston [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1979 to 1980]

Adjunct Instructor

Texas Southern University [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1984 to 1986]

adjunct assistant professor

Georgia State University [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1988 to 1989]

Associate Professor

Santa Monica College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1989 to 1993]

Dean

El Paso County Community College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1993 to 1995]

Executive Dean/Provost

El Paso County Community College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1995 to 1997]

Executive Dean/Provost

San Jacinto College South [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1997 to 2002]

President

Houston Community College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1997 to 1988]

Supervisor

NASA, Headquarters [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 2002 to 2005]

Chief Education Officer

NASA Goddard Space Flight Center [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 2005 to 2007]

Director of Education

St. Philip's College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 2007 to ?]

President