

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Aaronetta Pierce

PERSON

Pierce, Aaronetta, 1943-

**Alternative Names:** Aaronetta Pierce;

**Life Dates:** January 8, 1943-

**Place of Birth:** Somerville, Tennessee, USA

**Residence:** San Antonio, TX

**Occupations:** Civic Leader

## Biographical Note

Civic leader Aaronetta Pierce was born on January 8, 1943 in Somerville, Tennessee to Clementine Lofties Hamilton and David Aaron Hamilton. Pierce's father was dean of the Tennessee State University School of Agriculture and Home Economics. Pierce attended Tennessee State University where she studied French from 1959 to 1961 and transferred to The University of Iowa where she received her B.A. degree in English and social science in 1963.

From 1964 to 1967, Pierce taught in the San Antonio Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas, before she moved to Germany for three years. In the 1970s, Pierce began volunteering in the San Antonio community. In 1980, she joined the docent corps at the San Antonio Museum of Art as well as the board of the San Antonio Museum Association. In 1983, she also became active with the incorporation of the Southwest Ethnic Arts Society. In 1985, Governor Mark W. White, Jr. appointed Pierce as the first Black woman to serve on the Texas Commission on the Arts. San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros selected Pierce to chair the founding Martin Luther King City/County Commission, which planned and executed the city's inaugural Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrations in 1986. Two years later, Mayor Cisneros appointed Pierce chair of the San Antonio Blue Ribbon Committee on the Arts. The committee's report led to the creation of the San Antonio Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs. In 1990, Pierce and her husband founded Premier Artworks, Inc. to promote the work of African American artists and authors across the country.

Pierce has been recognized at the municipal and state level. In 1984, she was inducted into the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame, and in 1993, she was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame. The United Communities of San Antonio, Inc. awarded Pierce its Humanitarian Award, which recognizes individuals who promote

understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures, in 2007. In addition to holding long term membership in The Links, Incorporated and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Pierce served on boards for numerous organizations including Fisk University, the San Antonio Performing Arts Association, and the San Antonio Museum of Art.

Pierce and her husband, Dr. Joseph A. Pierce, Jr., have two sons, Joseph Pierce and Michael Pierce.

Aaronetta Pierce was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 8, 2018.

## Related Entries

**Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Magnet High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**University of Iowa** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**Tennessee State University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**San Antonio Independent School District** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1964 to ?]

**Teacher (Middle School)**

**San Antonio Performing Arts Association** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1982 to 1986]

**Board Member**

**San Antonio Museum Association** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1984 to 1990]

**Board Member**

**Texas Commission on the Arts** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1985 to 1991]

**Commissioner**

**MLK Jr. Commission** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1986 to 1996]

**Founding Chair**

**Las Casas Foundation** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1989 to 1995]

**Board Member**

**Fisk University Board of Trustees** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1992 to 2003]

**Board Member and Chair of Art Committee**

**Master's Leadership Program** [MEMBEROF]

[from 2004 to 2010]

**Art Advisor**

**University of Texas at Austin, Black Studies Department** [MEMBEROF]

[from 2014 to 2018]

**Founding Chair**