

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Damon Lester

PERSON

Lester, Damon, 1972-

**Alternative Names:** Damon Lester;

**Life Dates:** December 4, 1972-

**Place of Birth:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

**Residence:** Bowie, MD

**Work:** Largo, MD

**Occupations:** Business Executive

## Biographical Note

Business executive Damon Lester was born on December 4, 1972 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Faith and Joe Lester. Lester graduated from St. Barbara Catholic School in 1986, in Philadelphia. Lester graduated from Archbishop John Carroll High School, in 1990, in Radnor, Pennsylvania. He received his B.S. degree in accounting in 1994 from Temple University, in Philadelphia.

Lester served as staff accountant at Milligan And Company, in Philadelphia, one of the largest minority-owned CPA firms in the United States from 1994 to 1998. Lester served as supervisor, audit at Gelman, Rosenberg & Freedman in Bethesda, Maryland, where he specialized in creating non-profit organizations through the World Bank and audited international offices of USAID-funded non-profits, from 1998 to 2002. Lester joined the National Association of Minority Auto Dealers (NAMAD) team as vice president of operations, in Largo, Maryland in 2002. The organization was developed to assist in promoting minority auto dealers in the United States. Lester was named president, National Association of Minority Automobile Dealers in 2006. Lester's expertise and strategic relationships with major auto manufacturers positioned him as one of the nation's leading authorities on consumer finance, entrepreneurship and economic diversity issues in the industry. Lester is credited for: his involvement in the Detroit Big Three automobile manufacturers' request for US government financial relief and automobile industry revitalization in 2008; his assistance in negotiations between President Barack Obama's Administration and the Auto Task Force to secure the Memorandum of Understanding with General Motors for "wind-down" dealers, and restructuring of the General Motors Corporation in 2009; as well as NAMAD representation in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's bulletin of fair practices

regarding automobile dealer financing and diversity in the automobile industry in 2013.

Included among Lester's honors and awards, The Network Journal's 40 Under Forty Achievement Award in 2009, the FMCRC John Gamboa Community Leadership Award in 2010, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition Emerging Leader Award in 2011, Uptown Professional, DC Catalyst Award in 2014, the Savoy Top 100 Black Executives in Corporate America in 2014, the Real Times Media Vanguard Award in 2016, MEA Magazine Automotive Executive of the Year in 2017, and the Carma Foundation Spotlight Award in 2018.

Lester has served on the board of directors for DC Central Kitchen, Americans Well-Informed on Automobile Retailing Economics (AWARE), and the Automotive Trade Association Executives (ATAE). He was the first African-American board member for AWARE.

Lester's insight and opinions have been featured in dozens of media outlets including USA Today, National Public Radio, The Wall Street Journal, Black Enterprise Magazine, Network Business Journal, and The New York Times.

A life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Lester was involved with Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and the National Association of Black Accountants.

Lester has two sons, Jalen and Justin.

Damon Lester was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 23, 2018.

## Related Entries

**Temple University** [STUDENT OF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.S.**