

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ruth Edmonds Hill

PERSON

Hill, Ruth Edmonds

**Alternative Names:** Ruth Edmonds Hill;

**Life Dates:** March 5, 1925-

**Place of Birth:** Pittsfield, Massachusetts, USA

**Residence:** Cambridge, Massachusetts

**Occupations:** Librarian

## Biographical Note

Librarian Ruth Edmonds Hill was born on March 5, 1925 in Pittsfield, Massachusetts to William and Florence Edmonds. She attended Reed School and Central Junior High School in Pittsfield, and graduated from Pittsfield High School. Edmonds received her B.S. degree in biological sciences from Massachusetts State College in 1946, and her B.S. in library science from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts in 1949. She would later obtain her certificate in theatre librarianship from Columbia University School of Library Science in New York.

Edmonds Hill worked at Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield in 1943 and then in the catalog department at Massachusetts State College in 1947. Edmonds Hill served as a cataloger at Bennington College before becoming a catalog librarian at the Baker Library at Harvard Business School. She was later hired as a reference librarian for the New York Academy of Medicine and served in the catalog department at Yale University. She also worked as a cataloger at Berkshire Community College, a librarian at the Widener Library at Harvard University and The Louis Agassiz Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. In 1977, Edmonds Hill joined the Schlesinger Library staff at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts where she served as the audiovisual and oral history coordinator, and later exclusively as oral history coordinator, overseeing the library's projects for forty-two years. The oral history exhibition and book projects supervised by her include: the Black Women Oral History project in 1977, the Women in Federal Government Oral History project from 1981 to 1983, The Women of Courage: An Exhibition of Photographs book and traveling exhibition in 1984, the Cambodian American Women's Oral History project from 1987 to 1993, the Latina Women's Oral History project in 1989, the Tully Crenshaw Feminist Oral History project from 1990 to 1993, which was conducted by and with past officers and members of the National Organization for Women (NOW),

the Chinese American Women Oral History project in 1990, and the Oral History of Radcliffe College project from 1998 to 2005.

In 2000, Edmonds Hill joined The Oral History Review as an editorial board member. In 2004, she was named honorary member of the board of trustees for Samuel Harrison Society, an organization dedicated to preserving the homestead and history of her great grandfather, Reverend Harrison, pastor of the Second Congregational Church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts and of Sanford Street Congregational Church in Springfield, Massachusetts. Edmonds Hill was a member of the Oral History Association and served as chair of the Nonprint Format Award Committee. She also sat on the admissions committee for fellowships of the Cambridge Arts Council in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

She was the recipient of numerous honors, including the Harvey A. Kantor Memorial Award from New England Association of Oral History, the Lucy Miller Mitchell Heritage Award from Psi Omega Chapter, and the Alpha Kappa Alpha and Greater Boston YMCA Black Achievers Awards. Edmonds Hill also received a Harvard Hero Award from Harvard University in 2017.

Ruth Edmonds Hill was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 13, 2018.

## **Related Entries**