

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Michael A. Lawson

PERSON

Lawson, Michael Anderson

Alternative Names: Michael A. Lawson;

Life Dates: August 8, 1953-

Place of Birth: Little Rock, Arkansas, USA

Residence: Los Angeles, CA

Work: Los Angeles, CA

Occupations: Lawyer

Biographical Note

Lawyer Michael A. Lawson was born on August 8, 1953 in Little Rock, Arkansas to Ruth Ellen Jones and Milton Anderson Lawson. He received his B.A. degree in political science and economics in 1975 from Loyola Marymount University, in Los Angeles, California, and his J.D. degree from Harvard Law School, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Lawson began his law career as a staff attorney for the U.S. Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, in Washington, D.C. In 1980, he joined Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP, in Los Angeles, California, where he specialized in merger and acquisition transactions, bankruptcy, and litigation. Later, Lawson became a partner at the firm, where he worked for thirty-one years until 2011. In 2013, President Barack Obama nominated Lawson to serve as U.S. Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations. Based in Montreal, Canada, Lawson served in this role from 2014 to 2017, coordinating and regulating international air travel. In 2018, Lawson was named president and CEO of the Los Angeles Urban League.

From 2004 to 2014, Lawson served as vice chair of the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County's board of directors; and, from 2005 to 2011, he served as a member of the Board of Airport Commissioners (BOAC) for Los Angeles World Airports. In 2011, California Governor Jerry Brown appointed Lawson to the California State Teachers Retirement System (CALSTRS) Board of Trustees, the second largest retirement system in the United States, where he served until 2014. In addition, he served as a trustee of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and Loyola Marymount University of

Los Angeles. He was also a board director and former chairman of the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and a board director of the Advancement Project and the Music Center Foundation.

Lawson was the recipient of the Strickland Excellence Award from the Loyola Marymount University African American Alumni Association in 2010. He was also recognized by Chambers USA as one of the nation's "Leading Lawyers for Business."

Lawson and his wife, Mattie McFadden-Lawson, have two adult children, Michael Jr. and Jonathan.

Michael A. Lawson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 8, 2019.

Related Entries

Gibbs Magnet Elementary School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Manhattan Place Elementary School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Henry Clay Junior High School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Westchester High School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Loyola Marymount University [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Harvard Law School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

J.D.

[EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

[EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 197806 to 198006]

Staff Attorney

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, L.L.P. [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 198006 to 201106]

Partner

International Civil Aviation Organization [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 201407 to 201701]

U.S. Ambassador

The Los Angeles Urban League [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 201711 to ?]

President & CEO

The Los Angeles World Airports [MEMBEROf]
[from 2010 to 2014]

President

New Roads School [MEMBEROf]
[from 2001 to ?]

Board Member

The Advancement Project [MEMBEROf]
[from 2002 to 2014]

Board Member

Constitutional Rights Foundation [MEMBEROf]
[from 2003 to 2010]

Chairman

Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County [MEMBEROf]
[from 2004 to 2014]

Vice Chair

The Los Angeles World Airports [MEMBEROf]
[from 2005 to 2011]

Board of Directors

Loyola Marymount University [MEMBEROf]
[from 2009 to 2014]

Trustee

Morehouse College [MEMBEROf]
[from 2009 to 2014]

Trustee

Music Center Foundation [MEMBEROf]
[from 2010 to 2014]

Board Member

Western Regional Selection Panel for the White House Fellows Program [MEMBEROf]
[from 2010 to 2011]

Member

California State Teachers' Retirement System [MEMBEROf]
[from 2011 to 2014]

Trustee

[MEMBEROF]

[from ? to 2014]

Community Redevelopment Agency [MEMBEROF]

[from 2012 to 2014]

Chair