

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dawn Davis

PERSON

Davis, Dawn

Alternative Names: Dawn Davis;

Life Dates: June 23, 1965-

Place of Birth: Los Angeles, California, USA

Residence: New York, NY

Work: New York, NY

Occupations: Publisher

Biographical Note

Publisher Dawn Davis was born on June 23, 1965 in Los Angeles, California to Leona Julia and Louis Davis. She graduated from Immaculate Heart High School in Los Angeles, California in 1983, and received her B.A. degree in international relations from Stanford University in Stanford, California in 1987.

In 1987, Davis entered into a two year analyst program at the investment bank First Boston in New York City. Davis was then awarded a scholarship through Rotary International to complete an independent study abroad in Nigeria. While on this trip, Davis decided to leave investment banking and returned to New York City where she became the assistant to Andre Schiffrin at his newly founded publishing house, The New Press. In 1991, Davis published her first book, *If You Can't Stand the Heat: Tales from Chefs and Restaurateurs*, which featured world renowned chefs Anthony Bourdain and Edna Louis. Davis left The New Press in 1995 and joined the Penguin Random House imprint of Vintage Books. In 2001, Davis moved to HarperCollins as the vice president and editorial director of Amistad, the company's imprint devoted to work from and about the African diaspora. While there, Davis acquired and published award-winning novels and bestselling memoirs, including Edward P. Jones' Pulitzer-Prize winning *The Known World* and Chris Gardener's *The Pursuit of Happyness*, which became a major motion picture. In 2013, Davis founded her own imprint, 37 INK, at Simon & Schuster, Inc. 37 INK has published a variety of works including *The Butler* by Wil Haygood, *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl* by Issa Rae, *Never Caught: The Washingtons Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* by Erica Armstrong Dunbar, which was nominated for the National Book Award, and Nafissa Thompson Spires's *Heads of the Colored People*, which won the Los Angeles

Times Book Award for fiction. Through 37 INK, Davis also launched an online national black book club, The Inkwell Book Club.

Davis has received several awards and honors for her work. In 2019, Poets & Writers named her the Editor of the Year. She was also honored alongside Reginald Van Lee with the Visionary Award from the Metro Manhattan Chapter of The Links, Incorporated in 2014. Davis served on the Board of Directors of the Harlem School of the Arts in New York City.

Dawn Davis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 20, 2018.

Related Entries

Our Savior's Lutheran School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Immaculate Heart High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Stanford University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Stanford University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Credit Suisse First Boston [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 198706 to 198906]

Analyst

The New Press [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 199101 to 199506]

Editor/Subsidiary Rights Director

Random House Publishing [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 199507 to 200109]

Executive Editor, Vintage Books

HarperCollins [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 200110 to 201402]

Publisher of Amistad

Simon & Schuster [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 201404 to ?]

Publisher

37 Ink [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2013 to ?]

Founder

First Boston Corporation [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Analyst

The New Press [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Assistant

Penguin Random House- Vintage Books [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Paperback editor

Amistad [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Vice President and Editorial Director

HarperCollins [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Executive Editor

Ecco Press [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Executive Editor

Simon & Schuster, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Founder, vice president, and publisher at 37 INK of the Atria Publishing Group

Inkwell Book Club [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Founder

Jack & Jill [MEMBEROf]
[from 2012 to ?]

Harlem School of the Arts [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member