

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ronald L. Thompson

PERSON

Thompson, Ronald L.

Alternative Names: Ronald L. Thompson;

Life Dates: June 17, 1949-

Place of Birth: Detroit, Michigan, USA

Residence: Charleston, SC

Work: Auburn Hills, MI

Occupations: Corporate Executive; ; ;

Biographical Note

Chief executive officer Ronald L. Thompson was born on June 17, 1949 in Detroit, Michigan to Constance M. and Lurie D. Thompson. He received his B.B.A. degree in business management with distinction in 1969 from the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, and obtained his M.S. degree in 1972 and his Ph.D. degree in 1975, both in agricultural economics from Michigan State University, in East Lansing.

In 1977, Thompson served as chairman and chief executive officer of Evaluation Technologies. The following year, he was appointed general manager of Puget Sound Pet Supply Company in Seattle, Washington; and, in 1980, Thompson acquired The GR Group in St. Louis, Missouri where he served as chairman and chief executive officer. In 1993, he acquired Midwest Stamping, Inc., a manufacturer of medium and heavy gauge metal components for the automotive market in Maumee, Ohio, and served as chief executive officer and chairman. Thompson sold Midwest Stamping Inc. in 2005. Thompson also served on the faculties of Old Dominion University, Virginia State University and the University of Michigan.

Throughout his career, Thompson has served on many boards, including those of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri; the Plymouth Venture Partners Fund; the Medical University of South Carolina Foundation; Commerce Bank of St. Louis; The GR Group; Illinova Corporation; the National Association of Manufacturers; McDonnell Douglas Corporation; Midwest Stamping Company; Ralston Purina Company; and Ryerson Tull, Inc. In 2003, Thompson was elected to the board of directors for Interstate Bakeries Corporation; and, in 2008, he was named chairman of the board of the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association (TIAA). In 2009, he

joined the board of Chrysler Group LLC where he served a five year term through 2014. Thompson was later appointed a senior non-executive director of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles N.V. in October 2014.

Thompson also has been the recipient of several awards, including the National Minority Entrepreneur Award from the United States Department of Commerce and the Distinguished Service Award from Southern Illinois University, both in 1989; the inaugural Jesse Hill Business Award presented by Jet magazine, in 1998; and the National Association of Corporate Directors' (NACD) B. Kenneth West Lifetime Achievement Award, in 2020.

Thompson resides in Charleston, South Carolina, with his wife, Cynthia Bramlett Thompson. They have two adult children, Sela Thompson Collins and Mance Thompson.

Ronald L. Thompson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 12, 2021.

Related Entries

Cass Technical High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Michigan [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

BBA

Michigan State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

MS

Michigan State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

PhD

University of Michigan Center for Afroamerican and African Studies [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1970 to 1971]

Lecturer and Director of Community Services

Virginia State College [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 1975]

Research Associate and Associate Professor

Old Dominion University, Graduate School of Business Administration, Department of Marketing [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1975 to 1977]

Assistant Professor

Evaluation Technologies, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1977 to 1977]

Chair and CEO

R. L. Thompson and Associates, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1977 to 1980]

President and Principal Provider

Puget Sound Pet Supply Company [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1978 to 1979]

General Manager

The GR Group, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1980 to 1993]

Chair, President, and CEO

Midwest Stamping and Manufacturing Company [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1993 to ?]

Founder & CEO

Washington University in St. Louis [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Trustee

Illinois Federal Savings and Loan Association [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Commerce Bank of St. Louis, N.A. [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Southwestern Illinois Leadership Council [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Vice President

Illinova Corporation [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

McDonnell Douglas Corporation [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

TIAA [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member, Chair

Ryerson Tull [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Ralston Purina [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Interstate Bakeries Corporation [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Chrysler Group, LLC [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member, Lead Director

Plymouth Ventures Partnership II [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles N.V. [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Senior Non-Executive Director

Medical University of South Carolina Foundation [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Director

National Association of Manufacturers [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

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