

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Caretha Coleman

PERSON

Coleman, Caretha, 1950-

Alternative Names: Caretha Coleman;

Life Dates: February 21, 1950-

Place of Birth: Yokohama, Japan

Residence: Los Altos Hills, California

Work: Los Altos Hills, California

Occupations: Human Resources Chief Executive

Biographical Note

Executive consultant Caretha Coleman was born on February 21, 1950 in Yokohama, Japan to Chizuko Murata Watkins and Clifford Watkins. After graduating from St. Bernard's High School in Fitchburg, Massachusetts in 1968, Coleman briefly attended Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, Massachusetts.

From 1969 to 1973, Coleman worked as a flight attendant for Trans World Airlines. She then joined the human resources department at Hewlett-Packard in Palo Alto, California. Coleman remained with Hewlett-Packard for six years as its workforce grew from 21,000 to 52,000 employees. In 1979, Coleman was hired as a staffing manager at Spectra-Physics in Mountain View, California. In 1982, she was recruited to work as director of human resources at Software Publishing Corporation, also in Mountain View, where she was a vice president for nine years and where she helped guide one of the earliest successful desktop computer software companies.

Following a brief appointment at Verifone in 1991, Coleman worked as a consultant for Interval Research in Palo Alto, eventually becoming their chief administration officer, and with Mayfield, a venture capital firm in Menlo Park. In 1997, she became a founding member of The Angels Forum, a venture capital firm in Silicon Valley. In 1998, Coleman founded Coleman Consulting in Los Altos, which focuses on executive and CEO coaching, especially for minority entrepreneurs. In 2020, Coleman was elected a director of The RealReal, an online marketplace for resale luxury goods.

Coleman has served on numerous boards and committees. She chaired Dignity Health, the largest not-for-profit hospital provider in California, for three years. In 2015, she

was appointed chair of The Leverage Network, which aims to increase the number of African Americans on healthcare boards and to eliminate health disparities in communities of color. Coleman has also served the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Peninsula Community Foundation, YMCA, Facing History and Ourselves, Accion Opportunity Fund, Black Economic Alliance, Ravenswood Health Clinic, LifeMap Communications, and Viridis Learning. She is an advisor to the Santa Clara University Black Corporate Board Readiness program, Culture Shift, Illuminate Ventures, and Launch with Goldman Sachs.

Coleman is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including being named one of the Bay Area's Most Influential Women by the San Francisco Business Times, an Outstanding Director by the Silicon Valley Business Journal, a Visionary Leader by the SF Chronicle, and an American Leadership Forum Fellow. She received the YMCA's Red Triangle award and the Black Enterprise Trailblazer award in 2016 and was nominated as a Visionary Leader in the Bay Area for her work towards creating a more diverse community inside and outside the workplace. In 2017, Coleman and her husband, Kenneth L. Coleman, were honored by the City of Palo Alto for their philanthropic contributions to the Silicon Valley community, including their fundraising efforts to build a YMCA in East Palo Alto.

Coleman and her husband, Kenneth L. Coleman, live in Los Altos Hills, California. Together they have six children and thirteen grandchildren.

Caretha Coleman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 29, 2022.

Related Entries

St. Bernard's High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Mount Wachusett Community College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Trans World Airlines [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1969 to 1973]

Flight Attendant

Hewlett Packard Co. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1973 to 1979]

Human Resources

Spectra-Physics [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1979 to 1982]

Staffing Manager

Software Publishing Corporation [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1982 to 1991]

Director of Human Resources, Vice President

Interval Research [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1992 to 1998]

Consultant, Chief Administrative Officer

Mayfield [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1992 to 1998]

Consultant

Coleman Consulting [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1998 to ?]

Founder

The RealReal [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2020 to ?]

Board

Dignity Health [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Chair

The Leverage Network [MEMBEROf]
[from 2015 to ?]

Chair

Silicon Valley Community Foundation [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board

Peninsula Community Foundation [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board

YMCA [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board

Facing History and Ourselves [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board

Accion Opportunity Fund [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board

Black Economic Alliance [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board

Ravenswood Health Clinic [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Board

LifeMap Communications [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board

Virdis Learning [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board

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