

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Leah "Dookie" Chase

PERSON

Chase, Leah

Alternative Names: Leah "Dookie" Chase;

Life Dates: January 6, 1923-June 1, 2019

Place of Birth: New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Residence: New Orleans, LA

Work: New Orleans, LA

Occupations: Chef; Restaurateur

Biographical Note

Leah Chase, "the Queen of Creole Cuisine," was born January 6, 1923, in New Orleans, Louisiana, of Catholic Creole parents. She was sent to New Orleans in 1937 to live with her aunt and to attend St. Mary's Academy for high school. Her first job out of school was at the Oriental Laundry in the French Quarter. A week later, Chase was hired by the Colonial Restaurant on Chartres Street. She has been in the restaurant industry ever since.

In 1945, she met and married musician Edgar "Dooky" Chase II, whose parents owned the Dooky Chase Restaurant. At first, Chase spent her time raising her children and sewing, but once the children were old enough to attend school she began to work at the restaurant three days a week. She changed the menu to serve hot meals at lunchtime to black men who were beginning to work in offices. She started out as a hostess, but she was soon redecorating the restaurant and working as chef. Because of Chase, the Dooky Chase Restaurant is known for its good food, antiques and original African American art.

Chase has received many awards both for her culinary genius and her community service including: the coveted New Orleans Times Picayune 1997 Loving Cup Award, the Weiss Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Torch of Liberty Award, the University of New Orleans Entrepreneurship Award, the Outstanding Woman Award from the National Council of Negro Women, and numerous honors from the NAACP. She serves on many organizational boards including the Arts Council of New Orleans, the New Orleans Museum of Art and the Urban League. Chase is a frequent guest on many of the televised cooking shows and

was visiting culinary professor at Nichols State University in 1996. She has four children, sixteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Chase passed away on June 1, 2019.

Related Entries

A Whizz Kids Preschool Inc Ii [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

St. Mary Academy [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

St. Francis Xavier [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Colonial Restaurant [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1942 to ?]

Waitress

Dooky Chase Restaurant [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1946 to ?]

Restaurateur

Arts Council of New Orleans [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

National Urban League (NUL) [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]