

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dorothy Height

PERSON

Height, Dorothy I. (Dorothy Irene), 1912-2010

Alternative Names: Dorothy Height;

Life Dates: March 24, 1912-April 20, 2010

Place of Birth: Richmond, Virginia, USA

Residence: Washington, District of Columbia

Work: Washington, District of Columbia

Occupations: Civic Leader;

Biographical Note

Civic leader Dorothy Height was born in Richmond, Virginia, on March 24, 1912. At an early age, she moved with her family to Rankin, Pennsylvania. While in high school, Height was awarded a scholarship to New York University for her oratory skills, where she studied and earned her master's degree.

Height began her career working as a caseworker with the New York City Welfare Department, but at the age of twenty-five, she began her career as a civil rights activist when she joined the National Council of Negro Women. She fought for equal rights for both African Americans and women, and in 1944 she joined the national staff of the YWCA. She remained active with the organization until 1977, and while there she developed leadership training programs and interracial and ecumenical education programs. In 1957, Height was named president of the National Council of Negro Women, a position she held until 1997. During the height of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Height organized "Wednesdays in Mississippi," which brought together black and white women from the north and South to create a dialogue of understanding. Leaders of the United States regularly took her counsel, including First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and Height also encouraged President Dwight D. Eisenhower to desegregate schools and President Lyndon B. Johnson to appoint African American women to positions in government.

Height has served on a number of committees, including as a consultant on African affairs to the secretary of state, the President's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped and the President's Committee on the Status of Women. Her tireless efforts for equal rights have earned her the praise and recognition of numerous

organizations, as well. She has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Freedom From Want Award and the NAACP Spingarn Medal. She has also been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. Height passed away on April 20, 2010.

Related Entries

Little Red Schoolhouse (NYC) [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Negro World [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

New York Department of Welfare [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Greater New York Federation of Churches [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Harlem YWCA [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Junior Missionary Society [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Federation of Colored Women's Clubs [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Ramses Club [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Harlem Youth Council [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

National Black United Front [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

United Youth Committee Against Lynching [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Coordinating Committee for Employment [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

New York State Christian Youth Council [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

United Civil Rights Leadership group [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]