

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Rafael Cortada

PERSON

Cortada, Rafael L.

Alternative Names: Rafael Cortada;

Life Dates: February 12, 1934-April 11, 2017

Place of Birth: New York, New York, USA

Residence: Finksburg, MD

Work: Finksburg, MD

Occupations: College President

Biographical Note

Rafael Leon Cortada, Ph.D, was born on February 12, 1934, in New York City. His mother was a seamstress and his father was a postal worker. He attended Public Schools 99 and 39 until his family moved and enrolled him in a Catholic school. In 1951, Cortada received his high school diploma from St. Francis Xavier Military School in New York.

Shortly after earning his bachelor's of arts degree in philosophy from Fordham University in 1955, he was drafted into the army and stationed in Korea. In 1958, he received his master's degree in secondary education from Columbia University. He went on to further his education earning his Ph.D from Fordham in Latin American and modern European history in 1967.

Cortada taught high school history from 1957-1964 at New Rochelle High School in New York while working on his Ph.D. From 1964 to 1966, he taught Latin American history at the University of Dayton in Ohio. He then went on to work as a Foreign Service officer in the State Department from 1966 to 1969. From 1969 until 1974, Cortada taught at a number of colleges including Federal City College in Washington, D.C., Smith College in Massachusetts, Howard University, Medgar Evers College and Hostos Community College, both in New York.

In 1974, Cortada wrote and published his first and only book, *Black Studies, An Urban Comparative Curriculum*, and received his first job as a college president. From 1974 to 1977, Cortada served as president of Metropolitan Community College in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He then moved back East and accepted the presidency at Community

College of Baltimore, where he served from 1977-1982. From 1982 until 1987, he served as president of El Camino College in Torrance, California. In 1987, he was appointed president of the University of the District of Columbia and served in that post until 1990, when he was named president of Wayne County Community College in Detroit, Michigan. From 1994-1999, Cortada was president of Central Ohio Technical College in Newark, Ohio. From 1999 until his retirement in 2001, Cortada taught history education at Ohio State University at Newark.

Cortada passed away on April 11, 2017 at age 83.

Related Entries

P.S. 99, Dimitrious Myers School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

P.S. 39 [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

St. Anthony School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

St. Francis Xavier High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Fordham University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

B.A.

Columbia University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

M.A.

Fordham University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Ph.D.

Harvard University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

certificate

St. Francis Xavier Military School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Xavier High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

New Rochelle High School (New York) [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1957 to 1964]

Teacher

City University of New York, Bronx Community College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1957 to 1964]

Teacher

University of Dayton [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1964 to 1966]

professor and department chair

Department of State [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1966 to 1969]

foreign service officer

Howard University [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1967 to 1968]

Professor

Federal City College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1968 to 1969]

department chair

Smith College, Northampton, MA [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1969 to 1971]

Professor, Director

Federal City College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1969 to 1970]

associate provost/professor

City University of New York, Medgar Evers College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1970 to 1971]

Professor, Department Dean

City University of New York, Hostos Community College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1971 to 1974]

Professor, Dean of Students

Metropolitan Community College, Minneapolis [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1974 to 1977]

President

Community College of Baltimore [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1977 to 1982]

President

El Camino College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1982 to 1987]

president

Pepperdine University, Los Angeles [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1983 to 1987]

Professor

University of the District of Columbia [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1987 to 1990]

president/professor

American Association of State Colleges and Universities, D.C. [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1990 to 1991]

senior fellow

Wayne County Community College, Detroit [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1990 to 1994]

President

Ohio State University, Newark [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1994 to 1999]

dean

Central Ohio Technical College [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1994 to 1999]

president

Ohio State University [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1999 to 2001]

Professor