

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Aaron Dixon

PERSON

Dixon, Aaron Floyd

Alternative Names: Aaron Dixon;

Life Dates: January 2, 1949-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Albuquerque, NM

Occupations: Community Activist

Biographical Note

Community activist Aaron Lloyd Dixon was born on January 2, 1949 in Chicago, Illinois to Frances Sledge Dixon and Elmer James Dixon. The Dixons were leftist activists and valued the importance of fighting social injustice. Dixon moved to Seattle, Washington in 1958, when his father accepted a job as a technical illustrator for the United States Air Force. In 1961, at age eleven, Dixon walked alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in his march to end housing discrimination in Seattle. He attended Coleman Elementary School, Blaine Junior High School and in 1963, became one of the first African American youth to integrate predominantly white Queen Anne High School.

In 1967, Dixon attended Washington University and joined the local SNCC chapter. As a member of SNCC, Dixon met the black radical Larry Gossett, and co-founded the Seattle Area Black Student Union (SABSU). As members of the SABSU, Dixon, Gossett, and Dixon's younger brother, Elmer, promoted self determination, self-respect and self defense throughout Seattle's black community. In 1968, after attending funeral services in Oakland, California for seventeen-year-old Bobby Hutton, a founding member of the Black Panther Party that was shot down by Oakland police, Dixon, Gossett, and others established the Seattle chapter of the Black Panther Party. As founding member and captain of the Seattle chapter of the Black Panther Party, Dixon helped launch the Free Breakfast for School Children Program, which fed over 10,000 children every day before school. Dixon was also instrumental in the opening of a free medical and legal clinic.

In 1970, Congress began its full scale investigation of the Black Panther Party with much of its focus on the activities of the Seattle chapter. Although the investigation would lead to the demise of the Black Panther Party's many major city chapters, the

Seattle chapter would last longer than most. Dixon moved to Oakland, the national headquarters of the Black Panther Party, in 1972. There, he served as a bodyguard for chairperson Elaine Brown. Dixon worked on the mayoral campaign of Lionel Wilson in 1978, helping him to become Oakland, California's first African American mayor.

In 2002, Dixon founded the non-profit organization, Central House, to provide transitional housing for homeless young adults. Central House currently contains a youth leadership project that teaches youth to think positively, graduate high school and to control their destinies. In 2006, the Green Party of Washington nominated Dixon for the U.S. Senate. Following his campaign for U.S. Senate, Dixon organized the Center for Social Justice based out of the Seattle Central District. The Center for Social Justice organized an anti-war rally and march in January 2007.

Dixon was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 24, 2007 June 6, 2008 and July 26, 2019.

Related Entries

Queen Anne High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Coleman Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

James A. Garfield High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Meany Middle School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

University of Washington [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Central House [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Director

S.F. Youth Law Center [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1999 to 2001]

Program Coordinator

City of Seattle [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1986 to 1990]

Program Coordinator

Medona [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1990 to 1998]

Program Coordinator

Black Student Union at University of Washington [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Founder

Cannon House [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Black Panther Party [MEMBEROF]

[from 1968 to ?]

Chapter Founder; Member