

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sidmel Estes

PERSON

Estes, Sidmel, 1954-

Alternative Names: Sidmel Estes;

Life Dates: November 27, 1954-October 6, 2015

Place of Birth: Marysville, California, USA

Residence: Fayetteville, GA

Work: Fayetteville, GA

Occupations: Media Consultant; Television Producer

Biographical Note

Media consultant and executive television producer Sidmel Estes was born on November 27, 1954 in Marysville, California, to Emellen Estes and Sidney Estes. Estes attended elementary and high school at public schools in Atlanta. She earned her B.S.J. degree in 1976, and her M.S.J. degree in 1977, both from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in Chicago, Illinois.

In 1979, Estes returned to Atlanta and was hired at WAGA-TV/Fox 5, where she served as the executive producer of numerous programs. She was the co-creator and executive producer of Good Day Atlanta, which became the number one show in its market, and won seven Emmy Awards under her direction. In 2006 Estes left WAGA-TV in order to found and serve as CEO of BreakThrough Inc., a media consulting firm whose clients include the Frederick Douglass Family Foundation, the McCormick Tribune Fellows Foundation, the Tupac Amaru Shakur Foundation and the Atlanta Center for Creative Inquiry. She has also taught as an adjunct professor at Emory University and Clark Atlanta University.

In 1991, Estes was elected the first woman president of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ). Under her leadership NABJ increased its membership to over 2,000 journalists and was included in Ebony's list of Top 100 Black Organizations. In 1994, she was a leader and co-creator of the first Unity Conference, an alliance of journalists of color, and was instrumental in the release of their report Kerner Plus 25: A Call For Action, which outlined steps the media industry should take to improve racial diversity.

During her prolific career in television and journalism, Estes has been recognized numerous times. Atlanta's Mayor Andrew Young proclaimed "Sidmel Estes-Sumpter Day" on November 18, 1988 after she was named Media Woman of the Year by the Atlanta Chapter of the National Association of Media Women. She was featured in Ebony's 100 Most Influential Black Americans in 1993, and in More Magazine's book 50 Over 50. Estes was honored with the Silver Circle Award from the Television Academy and has won several Emmy Awards. She received Northwestern University's Alumni Service Award after being elected as president of the Northwestern Black Alumni Association in 2004.

Estes married B. Garnett Sumpter in 1983, and they had two children, Joshua and Sidney.

Sidmel Estes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 17, 2014.

Sidmel Estes passed away on October 6, 2015.

Related Entries

M. Agnes Jones Elementary [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Northside High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Northwestern University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.J. & M.S.J.

Frank L. Stanton Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Chicago Defender [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Intern - Reporter

Chicago Daily News [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1975 to 1976]

Intern - Reporter

KUAM-TV [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1977 to 1979]

Reporter

WAGA-TV (Television station: Atlanta,Ga.) [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1979 to 2006]

Executive Producer

BreakThrough, Inc. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2006 to ?]

Founder and CEO

Northwestern University Alumni Association [MEMBEROF]
[from 1976 to ?]

Member

Northwestern University Black Alumni Association [MEMBEROF]
[from 1976 to ?]

President

National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) [MEMBEROF]
[from 1984 to ?]

President & Chairman of the Board of Directors, Regional Director, Atlanta Chapter Chair, Vice Chair and Parliamentarian

Atlanta Association of Black Journalists [MEMBEROF]
[from 1985 to ?]

Chair, Vice Chair, Parliamentarian

UNITY: Journalists of Color [MEMBEROF]
[from 1994 to 2011]

Member

Board of Governors, Atlanta Press Club [MEMBEROF]
[from 1998 to 2000]

Member

Board of Advisors, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University [MEMBEROF]
[from 2000 to 2012]

Member

Board of Directors, Northwestern University Alumni Association [MEMBEROF]
[from 2005 to 2012]

Member

Board of Directors, Atlanta Center for Creative Inquiry [MEMBEROF]
[from 2005 to ?]

Member

the Tupac Amaru Shakur Foundation [MEMBEROF]
[from 2009 to ?]

Media Consultant

Board of Directors, Frederick Douglas Family Foundation [MEMBEROF]
[from 2010 to ?]

Member

