

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Cecil Hayes

PERSON

Hayes, Cecil

**Alternative Names:** Cecil Hayes;

**Life Dates:** April 25, 1945-

**Place of Birth:** Malone, Florida, USA

**Residence:** Parkland, FL

**Occupations:** Interior Designer

## Biographical Note

Interior designer Cecil Hayes was born on April 25, 1945, in Malone, Florida. Graduating from Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 1963, Hayes received her B.A. degree in art education from Florida A&M University in 1967. She went on to attend the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale and graduated in 1973 at the top of her class. Hayes taught art at Alma High School in Alma, Georgia, from 1967 to 1971.

From 1973 to 1975, she worked for Santa Stevens Interior Design. In 1975, Hayes opened her own shop called Cecil's Designs Unlimited. This family-owned and operated firm features design concepts that combine both art and interior design. Since 1983, she and her husband, Arzell Powell, have operated their own manufacturing division.

Hayes' clientele include a Who's Who in entertainment, sports and business, including actor/producer-Wesley Snipes, actors/producers-Mr. & Mrs. Samuel L. Jackson, Music mogul-Tim "Timbaland" Mosley, NBA's Phoenix Sun's All Star guard-Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway, NFL's New England Patriots Pro Bowl MVP-Ty Law, Retired NBA's Miami Heat-Jamal Mashburn and PJ Brown, Retired-NFL's Miami Dolphin-Louis Oliver, H.I.P. Insurance CEO Anthony Watson, Seaway National Bank of Chicago's CEO-Jacoby Dickens, Renowned Philanthropist-George and Cynthia Marks and the historic African-American Research Library and Cultural Center of Broward County.

Hayes' design works have been photographed for lead articles in Architectural Digest, Who's Who in Interior Design, Ebony, Southern Living, Florida Design, Boca Raton Magazine, South Florida and Haut Décor Magazines, The Sun Sentinel, The Miami

Herald, Boston Globe and USA Today News Papers; just to name a few. In 1999, she was honored with the prestigious Presidents Award of Excellence from the Florida A & M University National Alumni Association. In 1998, she won the notable African American Achievement Award; and for several years, she has received the distinguished Designer of the Year Award from the Designers and Decorators Guild, as well as Service Firm of the Year Award in 1985-1986-1993 from the C.B.E.D. Cecil was chosen as one of the Top Ten Female Interior Designers in South Florida.

Hayes is the author of two Interior Design books, “9 Steps to Beautiful Living” and “The Art of Decorative Details” published by Watson-Guptyl Random House.

Hayes is one of the first African American designers to manufacture furniture, case goods and upholstery; and the first African American designer to grace the pages of Architectural Digest. She is the first and only African American as well as the only designer from the South to be named to Architectural Digest’s Top 100 list of influential designers in the world.

Cecil Hayes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 18, 2002.

## Related Entries

**Dillard High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.S.**

**Santa Stevens Interior Design** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1973 to 1975]

**Cecil's Designs Unlimited** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1975 to ?]