

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Billie Wright Adams

PERSON

Adams, Billie Wright, Dr.

Alternative Names: Dr. Billie Wright Adams;

Life Dates: May 15, 1935-

Place of Birth: Bluefield, West Virginia, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Pediatrician

Biographical Note

Medical professor and pediatrician Dr. Billie Wright Adams was born in Bluefield, West Virginia. Her father, William Morris Wright, was a country doctor who accepted chickens and potatoes in lieu of cash for his services. Adams received her B. S. degree from Fisk University in 1950. The following year, she received her M. S. degree in zoology from the University of Indiana in Bloomington. Intending to begin a career in research, but not wanting to be isolated in the laboratory, Adams enrolled in medical school at Howard University. After receiving her M.D. degree in 1960, she focused her efforts on pediatric medicine, completing her residency at Cook County Children's Hospital. She then completed a fellowship in hematology at Cook Country Hospital from 1963 to 1964.

From 1964 to 1967, Adams served as a research associate in the Department of Hematology at the Hektoen Institute for Medical Research. She began teach as a clinical instructor at the Chicago Medical School in 1967. Adams served as an attending at Michael Reese Hospital in the pediatrics department in 1970 and then was appointed chief of the Pediatric Hematology Clinic at Mercy Hospital. Two years later, she joined the faculty of the University of Illinois in the Department of Pediatrics as a clinical assistant instructor. In 1976, she was promoted to clinical associate professor. Adams became the project director in 1980 of a United States Department of Health and Human Services funded grant for a Pediatric Primary Care Residency Program at Mercy Hospital. From 1981 to 1987, Adams served as the Assistant Program Director of Mercy Hospital & Medical Center's Department of Pediatrics. Her professional responsibilities over the years have also included acting bureau chief of the Chicago Department of Health, Bureau of Community and Comprehensive Personal Health; former president of the Chicago Pediatrics Society and coordinator of a medical student training program at Cook County Hospital.

Adams was recognized many times for her dedication to pediatric care. In 1997, the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics named her Pediatrician of the Year. She received the 1999 Chicago Medical Society Public Service Award and the 2012 Timuel Black Community Service Award from the Jazz Institute of Chicago. Adams served on the board of the Ounce of Prevention Fund. Adams is the widow of Frank Adams and the mother of Chicago attorney Frank Adams, Jr.

Dr. Billie Wright Adams was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 17, 2002.

Related Entries

The Toya School [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

The Young Street School [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

Genoa Junior High School [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

Genoa High School [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

Fisk University [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

A.B.

Indiana University [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

M.A.

Howard University [STUDENTOf]

[from ? to ?]

M.D.

Chicago Department of Health [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1968 to 1970]

Acting Bureau Chief

Cook County Hospital [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1990 to 1994]

Training Program Coordinator

[EMPLOYEEOf]

[from ? to ?]

Cook County Children's Hospital [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1960 to 1964]

Resident

Mercy Hospital [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1968 to ?]

Acting Program Director

University of Illinois College of Medicine [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1976 to ?]

Associate Clinical Professor

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) [MEMBEROf]
[from 19901 to ?]

Alpha Gamma Pi Organization [MEMBEROf]
[from 2008 to ?]

National Urban League (NUL) [MEMBEROf]
[from 2009 to ?]

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated [MEMBEROf]
[from 20121 to 20141]

South Side Community Art Center, Chicago [MEMBEROf]
[from 20051 to 20061]

American Academy of Pediatrics [MEMBEROf]
[from 20051 to 200512]