

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Alexa Canady-Davis

PERSON

Canady-Davis, Alexa, 1950-

Alternative Names: Dr. Alexa Canady-Davis; Alexa Canady; ; Dr. Alexa I. Canady

Life Dates: November 7, 1950-

Place of Birth: Lansing, Michigan, USA

Residence: Pensacola, FL

Occupations: Neurosurgeon

Biographical Note

Dr. Alexa Irene Canady-Davis was the first African American woman in the United States to become a neurosurgeon. Canady-Davis was born to Elizabeth Hortense (Golden) Canady and Dr. Clinton Canady, Jr., a dentist, on November 7, 1950, in Lansing, Michigan. After graduating from Lansing High School in 1967, Canady-Davis received her B.S. degree from the University of Michigan in 1971 and her M.D. degree (cum laude) from the College of Medicine at the University of Michigan in 1975. Between 1975 and 1976, Canady-Davis completed an internship at Yale-New Haven Hospital. She next trained as a resident in neurosurgery at the University of Minnesota between 1976 and 1981.

After a fellowship in pediatric surgery at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia between 1981 and 1982, Canady-Davis returned home to Michigan and joined the Neurosurgery Department at Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital. In 1983, she was hired at Children's Hospital of Michigan where she later became Chief of Neurosurgery in 1987. Before that, Canady-Davis was certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgery in 1984. In 1985, she began teaching at Wayne State University School of Medicine as a Clinical Instructor of Neurosurgery. In 1997, she was elevated to Professor of Neurosurgery at Wayne's School of Medicine. In 1988, she married George Davis, a U.S. Navy recruiter. From 1987 to 2001, Canady-Davis was Chief of Neurosurgery at Children's Hospital of Michigan. Her areas of expertise are cranio-facial abnormalities, hydrocephalus, tumors of the brain, and congenital spine abnormalities.

Upon retirement from the position of Chief of Neurosurgery in 2001, Canady-Davis moved to Pensacola, Florida with her husband, also retired—a city that he had lived in during part of his career in the Navy. But, after several years of retirement, Canady-Davis was lured back to surgery as a consultant and to a part-time surgical practice at

the Sacred Heart Medical Group Hospital.

Canady-Davis has received numerous professional recognitions, including being named Woman of the Year by the American Women's Medical Association in 1993, as well as being inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame. She mentors young people by speaking at high schools in the Pensacola area, hoping that her accomplishments are helping to inspire the dreams of younger generations.

Canady-Davis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers October 16, 2006.

Related Entries

Everett High School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Dwight Rich Middle School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

West Junior High School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Lewton School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

University of Michigan [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Fellow in Pediatric Neurosurgery

Sacred Heart Hospital Pensacola [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

Pediatric Neurosurgeon

Yale New Haven Hospital [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1975 to 1976]

Intern

University of Minnesota [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1976 to 1981]

Resident in Neurosurgery

Henry Ford Hospital [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1982 to 1983]

Pediatric Neurosurgeon

Children's Hospital of Michigan [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1983 to 2001]

Chair of Neurosurgery

Michigan Association of Neurological Surgeons [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

President

American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Food and Drug Administration [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Consultant for Neurological Devices