

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Phoebe Beasley

PERSON

**Beasley, Phoebe, 1943-**

**Alternative Names:** Phoebe Beasley; Arlene Pheobe Audrey Beasley

**Life Dates:** June 3, 1943-

**Place of Birth:** Cleveland, Ohio, USA

**Work:** Woodland Hills, CA

**Occupations:** Visual Artist

## Biographical Note

Visual artist Phoebe Beasley was born on June 3, 1943 in Cleveland, Ohio to parents Annette and George Arthur Beasley, Jr. When Beasley was seven years old, her mother died of a heart attack at twenty-nine years of age. Her father later married Mildred Gaines. After graduating from John Adams High School in 1961, Beasley entered Ohio University, where she received her B.F.A. degree in painting, with a minor in education, in 1965. She went on to study at the Art Center College of Design and the Otis Art Institute. In 1965, Beasley joined Glenville High School in Cleveland, Ohio, as an art teacher. She eventually opened a store front studio and gallery along with several artists. She specialized in oils-on-canvas, as well as prints and collages. Beasley moved to Los Angeles, California in 1969, where she worked as a layout artist at SAGE Publications for one year before joining KFI Radio. Beasley worked at KFI for twenty-nine years, eventually as senior account manager. In 1973, she established the Phoebe Beasley Art Studio; and, in 1976, she began showing at solo art exhibitions. Beasley's collage artwork was part of two major touring museum exhibitions, including a 2003 group show mounted by the Smithsonian Institution entitled *In the Spirit of Martin*, honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a museum show entitled *Portraying Lincoln: Man of Many Faces* in 2008. Beasley's works are also featured in the homes of Oprah Winfrey, Anita Baker, Dr. William Burke and Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Dr. Maya Angelou, LaTanya Richardson and Samuel L. Jackson, Tavis Smiley, Byron Allen, Grant Hill, Marla Gibbs, Roger Penske and Tyler Perry.

Beasley's commissions include being the official artist of the 1987 and 2000 Los Angeles Marathons, the 1999 National Convention of the 100 Black Men of America, and the 2000 National Democratic Convention. She is the only artist commissioned to do the inaugural artwork for two U.S. presidents; first, in 1989, for the inauguration of

President George Bush; and, in 1993, for the inauguration of President Bill Clinton.

In 1977, Beasley became the first Black woman to be appointed president of American Women in Radio and Television. In 1997, she joined the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and served for over ten years. In 2105, she was appointed to the California Arts Council.

Beasley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 18, 2007 and November 18, 2019.

## Related Entries

**Robert Fulton Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Charles W Eliot School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Moses Cleaveland Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**John Adams High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Diploma**

**Ohio University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.F.A.**

[EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Glenville High School** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1965 to 1969]

**Teacher**

**Sage Publications, inc.** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1969 to 1970]

**Art Work/ Graphics**

**KFI Los Angeles** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to 1999]

**Senior Account Manager**

**Beasley Art Studio** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1973 to ?]

**Artist**

**Trusteeship Magazine** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Member**

**United Negro College Fund (UNCF)** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board of Directors**

**Story Project** [MEMBEROF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Board of Directors**

**Prologue Society** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1999 to 2006]

**Board of Directors**

**Museum of African-American Art** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1980 to 1999]

**Board of Directors**