

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Janet L. Sims-Wood

PERSON

Sims-Wood, Janet L., 1945-

Alternative Names: Janet L. Sims-Wood;

Life Dates: May 22, 1945-

Place of Birth: Rutherfordton, North Carolina, USA

Residence: Laurel, Maryland

Occupations: Historian; Reference Librarian

Biographical Note

Historian, publisher, and reference librarian Janet Louise Sims-Wood was born on May 22, 1945 in Rutherfordton, North Carolina to Marvin and Hazel Sims. Sims-Wood attended Carver High School where she worked in the school library. At the encouragement of her school librarian, she attended college at North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina, receiving her B.S. degree in sociology with a minor in library science in 1967. Sims-Wood worked in several Washington, D.C. libraries until a supervisor cautioned her that she would not advance without a master's degree. She enrolled at the University of Maryland where, in 1972, she received her M.L.S. degree. Sims-Wood later completed twenty-one hours in African American history at Howard University before earning her Ph.D. in 1994 in women's studies, history and oral history from Union Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio. She also holds a ministerial diploma from the Spirit of Faith (SOF) Bible Institute in Temple Hills, Maryland.

Sims-Wood began her career in library science in 1972 as a Reader's Advisor in the Black Studies Division of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in Washington, D.C. This experience led to her interest and specialization in African American history. In 1974, Sims-Wood became an assistant reference librarian at Moorland Spingarn Research Center at Howard University. She was appointed to Assistant Chief Librarian for Reference, Reader Services of the Moorland Spingarn Research Center in 1987, a position she held until her retirement in 2005. Sims-Wood has taught black women's history courses at the University of Maryland, and has served as a children's librarian with the Washington, D.C. Public Library System. She worked part-time for Prince George's Community College Library. Sims-Wood was part of a team of librarians who provide online services through a nation-wide 24/7 virtual reference program called AskUsNow.

Sims-Wood is a founding associate editor of SAGE: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women which published the anthology Double Stitch: Black Women Write About Mothers and Daughters. She was the founder of a small publishing company, Afro Resources, Inc., which published a 1993 calendar depicting black women who served in the Women's Army Corps during World War II. Sims-Wood has served as a consultant to several publishers and agencies, including Carlson Publishing Company's Black Women in America series and the American Girl's Addy doll and book series. Sims-Wood has also served as a bibliographer for the annual Black History Month kits of the Association for the Study of American Life and History. She is a life member and has held several executive positions in the Association for the Study of American Life and History and the Association of Black Women Historians.

Janet Sims-Wood was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 24, 2007.

Related Entries

Paul L Dunbar School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

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

High School Diploma

North Carolina Central University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

University of Maryland [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

M.L.S.

Howard University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Union Institute & University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Ph.D,

Spirit of Faith Bible Institute [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Diploma of Ministerial Studies

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1972 to 1974]

Reader's Advisor

Howard University. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1974 to 2005]

Assistant Chief Librarian

University of Maryland, College Park [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1995 to 1996]

Adjunct Faculty

Prince George's Community College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2001 to ?]

Reference Librarian

Journal of African American Children's Literature [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Editorial Board

Afro Resources, Inc. [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Founder and President

Pleasant Company Publications [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Editorial Board

Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Founding Associate Editor

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Committee Member

Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) [MEMBEROf]
[from 1975 to ?]

Vice-President

Association of Black Women Historians (U.S.) [MEMBEROf]
[from 1979 to ?]

Secretary