

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Elzie Higginbottom

PERSON

Higginbottom, Elzie, 1941-

Alternative Names: Elzie Higginbottom;

Life Dates: November 24, 1941-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Chicago, Illinois

Work: Chicago, Illinois

Occupations: Real Estate Developer

Biographical Note

Housing developer Elzie L. Higginbottom was born on November 24, 1941 in Chicago, Illinois to Elzie Higginbottom and Katherine Skaggs Higginbottom. His parents instilled entrepreneurial and service values within him. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1965 with his B.A. in agricultural economics and was an accomplished athlete in men's track and field. In 1963, he was named NCAA outdoor All-American, placing fifth in the 440 yard dash in national competition. He also won Big Ten indoor titles in the 440. Higginbottom was a three time Big Ten champion, anchoring the mile relay to a conference title in 1962. He also held the University of Wisconsin-Madison records in the indoor and outdoor 440 yard dash for more than twenty years. Higginbottom was later honored by the university with the distinguished alumni award. All of his success as a track athlete taught him how to focus and discipline himself, which proved invaluable in his real estate endeavors.

Higginbottom was hired by Baird & Warner in Chicago, Illinois. While at Baird & Warner, he created and directed the Government Assisted Multifamily Finance Division, producing an annual loan volume of \$50 million to \$100 million for twelve consecutive years. By 1974, Higginbottom was promoted to mortgage vice president in charge of FHA financing. In 1983, Higginbottom left Baird & Warner and started East Lake Management & Development Corp., which grew to become the largest minority-owned real estate company in the State of Illinois. Mr. Higginbottom is committed to providing affordable, safe and comfortable housing to Chicagoans. He is also the first minority developer of hi-rises in the Chicago Loop and River North area including 200 N. Dearborn and 1250 N. LaSalle Street. He has developed and managed several thousand units for his own company as well as for the Chicago Housing Authority and

others.

In 2005, Higginbottom made Crain's Chicago Business list of "Who's Who in Real Estate." In 2000, he was inducted into the Chicago Association of Realtors Hall of Fame and is the only African-American to receive that honor. In 2004 he endowed the Higginbottom Urgent Care for Kids Unit at Mercy Hospital. Wanting to inspire young athletes, Higginbottom and Dr. Conrad Worril co-founded Friends of Track and Field in 2006. He is a board member for After School Matters in Chicago and a Trustee for Illinois Institute of Technology. He is married to Deborah Larsen and they have four children.

Elzie Higginbottom, Jr. was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 17, 2012.

Related Entries

University of Wisconsin-Madison [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S. Economics

Dr. Charles Gavin School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Washington Junior High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

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

Morgan Park Laundromat [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Baird & Warner [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1965 to 1982]

Mortgage Vice President

ELH Properties [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1975 to 1983]

Founder and CEO

East Lake Management & Development Corp. [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1983 to ?]

Founder and CEO

Friends of Track and Field [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Founder

Cook County Housing Authority Board [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

University of Wisconsin Athletic Board [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Trustee

Governor's Workforce Investment Board [MEMBEROF]

[from 1973 to 1976]

Co-Chair

Illinois Gaming Board [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Chair