

Mr. Richard Tarrence on Education and Employment



“There is no question that my upbringing and my background is a solid rock in my life. I mean, my mother’s words of wisdom, my father—very gentle people. Very loving and honest people, and they had a drive and a stick-to-it-iveness that I inherited obviously.

I’ve never been one to waver a lot. You see that from my job histories; I stay on one job, pretty loyal to that. I just taught my kids to maintain a course, to not fight back in anger, but to fight back if threatened or injured or something like that.”

Richard Tarrence was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1945, the second-oldest of seven siblings. His parents moved to Ohio from the South in the 1930s; his maternal grandfather was a bishop in the AME church, and his paternal grandfather was a sharecropper. He was drafted in 1965 and spent four years in the Air Force, including time in Vietnam. He married his ex-wife, Loretta Wilson, who was from Maine, and they moved to Portland in 1975. He completed a degree in Criminal Justice at USM in 1979, and spent twenty-two years working for Allstate Insurance. The family lived in Portland, South Portland, and eventually settled in Gorham. At the time of this interview, Tarrence was the chairman of the board of Green Memorial AME Zion Church, and was involved with the Health 2000 AIDS awareness program there.

You can listen to Mr. Tarrence's full interview and read a transcript at

https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/aa_hiwimi/5/