

Janet Emerson Bashen

Janet Emerson Bashen (born February 12, 1957) is an American inventor, entrepreneur, and business consultant, best known for patenting a software program, LinkLine, to assist with web-based Equal Employment Opportunity investigations, and thus becoming the first African American woman to obtain a software patent.^[1]

Contents

Early life and education

Career

Honors

References

Early life and education

Emerson was born on February 12, 1957 in Mansfield, Ohio.^{[2][3][4]} Her mother was an ER nurse and her father was a garbage collector.^{[2][5][4]} As a child, her family moved to Huntsville, Alabama, where Emerson was raised.^[2] She studied at Alabama A&M,^{[2][5]} where she met her husband Steven Bashen. She then moved to Houston, where she studied legal studies and government at the University of Houston.^{[2][5][4]} Following her graduation from UH, Bashen did further studies at Rice University's Graduate School of Administration^{[2][5][4]} and Harvard University,^{[2][5][4]} before graduating from Tulane Law School with a Master of Jurisprudence in Labor and Employment Law.^[6]

Career

After graduating, Bashen worked for an insurance company dealing with claims related to Equal Employment Opportunities.^[2] Bashen suggested to her CEO that they hire independent investigators to assess such claims, believing that they would be more impartial.^{[2][7][4]} When the CEO refused, Bashen took a \$5,000 loan from her mother and in 1994, began her own company, Bashen Corp., to handle EEO compliance and complaints.^{[2][7][4]}

As her company grew, Bashen became aware of the need for better ways of storing and accessing the data related to claims.^{[2][7][4]} With a cousin, Donny Moore, who was a computer scientist, Bashen began developing software to do this.^{[2][7][4]} This service became LinkLine, "Bashen's patented EEO compliance and case management software."^{[2][7][3][4]} On December 20, 2007 LinkLine earned Patent No. 6,985,922,B1, making Janet Emerson Bashen the first African-American woman to earn a software patent.^{[2][5][3][4]}

Bashen has also developed AAPLink, software which assists employers in meeting Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs requirements,^{[2][5][4]} 1-800Intake, a fulltime, online service for employees to report complaints about their workplaces,^{[2][5][4]} and other software.^{[2][4]}

Janet Emerson Bashen	
	
Born	Mansfield, OH, USA
Nationality	American
Alma mater	University of Houston, Harvard University, Tulane Law School
Occupation	Inventor, Entrepreneur
Employer	Bashen Corporation
Known for	Being the first African American woman to patent software (LinkLine)
Home town	Huntsville, AL, USA

In May 2000, she testified before the U.S. House of Representatives that civil rights and employee misconduct investigations should be exempt from the Fair Credit Reporting Act.^[8]

Bashen serves on the Women's Leadership Board at the Harvard Kennedy School.^{[5][4][6]}

Honors

- 2003 - Houston, TX Chamber of Commerce Pinnacle Award^{[2][4][9]}
- 2004 - National Association of Negro Women in Business Crystal Award^{[2][4]}
- 2010 - MIT Recognition at World Festival of Black Arts and Culture in Dakar, Senegal^{[2][5][4]}
- 2012 - Named in Ebony magazine's Power 100 List of the most influential African-Americans in entertainment, politics, sports and business^[10]
- Black Inventors' Hall of Fame^{[2][4]}

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