

Prominent Black Media Exec Richard Parsons Dies of Cancer

Richard Parsons held top posts at Time Warner and Citigroup. He was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2015.

December 31, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Skilled businessman Richard Parsons, one of corporate America's most prominent Black executives, died of [cancer](#) last week at age 76, according to [The Associated Press \(AP\)](#).



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Throughout his long career, Parsons held top positions at, among others, Citigroup and Time Warner, where he served as CEO until 2007.

In 2015, Parsons was diagnosed with [multiple myeloma](#), an uncommon [blood cancer](#) that affects the bone marrow, where new blood cells are produced. The malignancy occurs when the body makes too many plasma cells, a type of white blood cell.

In the United States, the average lifetime risk of developing multiple myeloma is less than 1%, according to the [American Cancer Society](#). This year, about 35,780 people developed multiple myeloma, and nearly 12,500 people died of the disease in the United States.

Treatment for multiple myeloma depends on symptoms, disease stage and whether and how much it has spread.

Although Parsons went into remission after [stem-cell](#) therapy, complications in 2018 caused him to step down from his role as interim chairman of the board of CBS.

The financial services company Lazard, where Parsons was a longtime board member, confirmed that Parsons died on December 26 in his Manhattan home.

Parsons had stepped down from the boards of Lazard and Lauder's company, Estée Lauder, at the start of this month, citing health reasons.

"Dick was an American original, a colossus bestriding the worlds of business, media, culture, philanthropy, and beyond," Ronald Lauder, one of Parson's oldest friends and a member of the Estée Lauder board, told AP in a statement.

Parsons was born in Brooklyn and enrolled at the University of Hawaii at Manoa at age 16. After attending the University of Hawaii, Parsons enrolled in Albany Law School, where he earned a law degree in 1971, finishing at the top of his class, according to [University of Hawai'i News](#).

Parsons was outspoken about social justice issues, supported humanitarian causes and was the chairman of the board of directors of the Jazz Foundation of America.

"Dick's storied career embodied the finest traditions of American business leadership," Lazard said in the statement. The company commended his "unmistakable intelligence and his irresistible warmth."

