

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Amyre Ann Makupson

---

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Makupson, Amyre
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Amyre Ann Makupson,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 5, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:29:13).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Television anchor Amyre Ann Makupson (1947 - ) was hired as an anchor by WGPR-TV, the nation's first African American-owned television station. She has also hosted "Morning Break," was co-anchor of WKBD's "Ten O'Clock News," and is the winner of five local Emmy awards. Makupson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 5, 2005, in Southfield, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_097
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Detroit television news anchor, Amyre Ann Porter Makupson was born on September 30, 1947 in River Rouge, Michigan to Dr. Rudolph Hannibal and Amyre Ann Porche Porter. She attended Visitation Catholic Elementary School in Detroit, Michigan and graduated from St. Mary's Academy High School in Monroe, Michigan in 1965. She earned her B.A. degree in dramatics and speech from Fisk University in 1970 and her M.A. degree in speech arts/communications theory from American University in 1972.

Makupson held positions at WSM-TV in Nashville and WRC-TV in Washington, D.C. before returning to Detroit, Michigan in 1975 to work as director of public relations for Head Start, the Michigan Health Maintenance Organization. That same year, Makupson was hired by WGPR-TV, the nation's first African American-owned television station, as a news anchor for "Big City News" and the Detroit focused talk show "Porterhouse." In 1977, Makupson joined WKBD-TV as a news anchor and public affairs director. At WKBD-TV, she hosted "Morning Break," the station's daily talk show, and produced and anchored a five-minute newsbreak. In 1985, Makupson co-anchored WKBD's "Ten O'clock News" and anchored "Eyewitness News at 11" on WKBD's sister station, WWJ-TV.

Makupson has won six local Emmy awards including Best News Anchor, Best Interview/Discussion Program, and three for Best Commentary. In 1992 and 1995, Makupson won the Oakland County Bar Association Media Award for the show "Straight Talk" and named SCLC's Media Person of the Year in 1995. She was also named the March of Dimes' Humanitarian of the Year in 1996 and Makupson was inducted into the Silver Circle of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in 2003. An author, Makupson published "So...What's Next?" in 2004. Makupson serves on the boards of The Alzheimer's Foundation, the Sickle Cell Association, the Skillman Foundation, Covenant House, the Providence Hospital Fund, and the March of Dimes. Makupson lives outside of Detroit, Michigan with her husband, Walter, with whom she has two children.

Amyre Ann Makupson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 5, 2005.

---

# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Amyre Ann Makupson was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 5, 2005, in Southfield, Michigan, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Television anchor Amyre Ann Makupson (1947 - ) was hired as an anchor by WGPR-TV, the nation's first African American-owned television station. She has also hosted "Morning Break," was co-anchor of WKBD's "Ten O'Clock News," and is the winner of five local Emmy awards.

---

# Restrictions

## Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

## Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

---

# Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

---

# Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

## Persons:

Makupson, Amyre

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Makupson, Amyre--Interviews

---

African American television journalists--Interviews

---

# Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

# Occupations:

Television Anchor

---

# HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

---

# Administrative Information

## Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

## Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Amyre Ann Makupson, April 5, 2005. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

## Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

---

# Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

---

# Detailed Description of the Collection

## Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Amyre Ann Makupson, Section A2005\_097\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Amyre Ann Makupson was born on September 30, 1947 in River Rouge, Michigan. She shares a family name with her Creole mother, Amyre Porche Porter, who was from Saint John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana. Makupson's mother attended high school in Chicago, Illinois before moving to Detroit with her sister. Makupson's maternal grandfather was a barrel-maker. Makupson's father, Rudolph Porter, was from Austin, Texas. His mother worked as a cook at the Austin County Jail and his father worked as a railway clerk. He attended Meharry Medical College. He practiced medicine at River Rouge's black hospital Sidney A. Sumby Memorial Hospital and made house calls, which Makupson and her siblings accompanied him on. Makupson's mother was a housewife. Makupson earliest childhood memory is of riding her bike in River Rouge. When she was five years old her family moved to Detroit where she developed a love of Motown music. She attended Visitation Catholic School in Detroit and St. Mary Academy in Monroe, Michigan.

African American families--Michigan--River Rouge.

African American children--Michigan--River Rouge.

Education, Primary--Michigan--Detroit.

Education, Secondary--Michigan--Monroe.

Motown Record Corporation.

Meharry Medical College.

Video Oral History Interview with Amyre Ann Makupson, Section A2005\_097\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:23 ?

Amyre Ann Makupson attended St. Mary Academy in Monroe, Michigan, for her last two years of high school. She acted in plays, played basketball and debated. Makupson aspired to be an actress, pediatrician, psychiatrist, Olympic swimmer, or news anchor. She attended Howard University before transferring to Wiley College. Makupson's brother died the summer after she enrolled, which devastated her, and she transferred to Fisk University. At Fisk, she was mentored by Dr. Gladys Ford, a speech professor. She graduated in 1970 with a B.A. degree in speech and earned her M.A. degree from American University in 1972. She returned to Detroit and worked as an anchor for WGPR-TV's 'Big City News.' In 1977, she began a 25 year career at WKBD, surviving five ownership changes and earning six Emmys. She describes her anchoring style, memorable news stories, and the advancements of women in media. Makupson also remembers the Civil Rights era, explains how her racial ambiguity has affected her career and narrates photographs.

Fisk University.

Education, Higher--Tennessee--Nashville.

American University (Washington, D.C.).

Education, Higher--Washington (D.C.).

African American college students--Tennessee--Nashville.

Civil rights movements--Michigan--Detroit.

Television stations--Michigan--Detroit.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Freedom Fund Program.

Video Oral History Interview with Amyre Ann Makupson, Section A2005\_097\_001\_003, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Amyre Ann Makupson was involved with a number of organizations and causes in Detroit, Michigan at the time of the interview, including the Alzheimer's Association, Covenant House Michigan, and the Providence Hospital

Foundation of Michigan. After her network stopped offering news programming in December 2002, Makupson began acting with Detroit Reparatory Theatre and finished writing the book 'So What's Next,' which was a compilation of thoughts about the afterlife. She remembers the most exciting times of her career, including being honored at a roast at Detroit's Roostertail by Karmanos Cancer Institute and being on the 'Oprah Show' on the same day that she emcee'd a live episode of 'The Jeffersons.' She also remembers working on a PSA with basketball star Isiah Thomas. Makupson talks about the decline of Detroit and offers her hopes for the city; she reflects upon her life, legacy, and how she would like to be remembered and concludes by narrating her photographs. Makupson has two children.

Detroit (Mich.) African American families--Michigan--Detroit.

African American families--Michigan--Detroit.