

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jewell Jackson McCabe

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McCabe, Jewell Jackson, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe,
Dates:	June 20, 2007, June 25, 2007 and June 7, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	24 Betacame SP videocassettes (8:39:59).
Abstract:	Nonprofit chief executive Jewell Jackson McCabe (1945 -) was the founder of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, president of Jewell Jackson McCabe Associates. She was also the first female finalist for the executive directorship of the NAACP. McCabe was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 20, 2007, June 25, 2007 and June 7, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_181
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Founder of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Jewell Jackson McCabe was born on August 2, 1945, in Washington, D.C., to broadcasting pioneer Harold “Hal” Jackson and businesswoman, Julia O. Hawkins. McCabe started dancing at three and graduated from the New York High School of Performing Arts as a dance major in 1963. McCabe attended Bard College until 1964, when she left after her marriage to Frederick Ward, an advertising copywriter; they divorced in 1967. McCabe later married Eugene McCabe, then-president of North General Hospital in New York City; though the couple divorced in 1992, McCabe retained her former last name for professional purposes.

Active in the community, McCabe spent summers in the late 1960s teaching dance to at-risk teens in Harlem. McCabe began her institutional career when she took a receptionist’s job with the city in 1969. After swift and repeated promotions, McCabe was named Director of Public Affairs at the New York Urban Coalition in 1970. That same year, McCabe joined a small group of women, the first chapter of the NY Coalition of 100 Black Women. McCabe served as Press Officer for Women and Minorities under Gov. Hugh Cary from 1975 to 1977. In 1977, McCabe became Director of Government and Community Affairs for WNET-TV. Elected president of the Coalition of 100 Black Women, in 1976, McCabe expanded the organization nationally; it became the National Coalition of 100 Black Women in 1981. In 1991, McCabe stepped down to become the Chairman of the Board, an office she held until 1993 when McCabe became the first woman finalist for the executive directorship of the NAACP.

A Presidential, Gubernatorial, and Mayoral appointee, McCabe was appointed by President Clinton to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council’s Committee on Conscience. Governor Mario M. Cuomo appointed McCabe to the New York State Council on Fiscal and Economic Priorities and to Chair of the New York State’s Job Training Partnership Council.

McCabe has earned two honorary doctorates, from Iona and Tougaloo Colleges, and has served on the following boards: Reliance Group Holdings; the New York City Investment Fund, L.I.C; The Wharton School of Business; and Bard College. McCabe is President of Jewell Jackson McCabe Associates – a multi-lingual strategic communications firm specializing in competitiveness training and executive coaching. The firm has advised American Express; Time Warner; The Coca-Cola Company; Matsushita Electric Corporation of America (Panasonic); International Business Machines Corporation (IBM); Council for Opportunity in Education (COE); NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.; Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; and The College Board. McCabe, a frequent guest political analyst, has opined on the *Today Show*, in *The New York Times*, and is featured in Brian Lanker’s “I Dream A World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America”. McCabe has also been honored for her community activism by receiving the following awards: citation from Malcolm/King College; citation from the YWCA; Eastern Region Urban League Guild Award; a Seagram's Civic Award; a Links, Inc. Civic Award; and an Outstanding Community Leadership Award from Malcolm/King College.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe was conducted by Adrienne Jones on June 20, 2007, June 25, 2007 and June 7, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 24 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit chief executive Jewell Jackson McCabe (1945 -) was the founder of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, president of Jewell Jackson McCabe Associates. She was also the first female finalist for the executive directorship of the NAACP.

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:

McCabe, Jewell Jackson, 1945-

Jones, Adrienne (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
McCabe, Jewell Jackson, 1945- --Interviews

African American businesspeople--Interviews

African American civic leaders--Interviews

African American women civic leaders--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

National Coalition of 100 Black Women (U.S.)

Occupations:

Nonprofit Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Jewell Jackson McCabe, June 20, 2007, June 25, 2007 and June 7, 2007. 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 Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_002_001, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe's maternal grandmother, Ercer Ricks, was born in 1899 to a freed slave and the son of a wealthy landowner in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Jackson McCabe's mother, Julia Hawkins Jackson, grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and then moved to Washington, D.C. There, she attended Paul Laurence Dunbar High School; and met Jackson McCabe's father, Hal Jackson, who was from Charleston, South Carolina. His parents died when he was young, and his older sisters helped raise him. After graduating from Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, he attended Howard University, where he began his career in radio broadcasting at The Washington Post's WINX Radio. An entrepreneur, he created his own program, 'The House That Jack Built,' where he interviewed African American leaders like Dr. Charles R. Drew, attorney Thurgood Marshall and educator Mary McLeod Bethune. He eventually purchased the Washington Bears basketball team. Jackson McCabe grew up on Washington, D.C.'s East Capitol Street.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_002_002, TRT: 0:31:11 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe grew up during the era of segregation in Washington, D.C., where she began her education at Park View Elementary School. Her mother was the assistant to Anne Mason Roberts of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and a founding member of the Coalition of 100 Black Women; while Jackson McCabe's father worked in broadcasting in Washington, D.C. and New York City. In 1955, Jackson McCabe moved with her mother and grandmother to the St. Albans neighborhood of Queens, New York, where she attended P.S. 136, Roy Wilkins School. Due to her father's connections, she frequently went backstage at New York City's Apollo Theater, and was once punished for helping her friends meet Smokey Robinson without permission. She describes her parents' disciplinary style, and her family's preference for fried foods. Jackson McCabe went on to study in the dance department of New York City's High School of Performing Arts, where the director sometimes made disparaging comments about her body.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_002_003, TRT: 0:29:31 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe was excluded from dancing in the senior recital at the High School of Performing Arts (PA) in New York City, although she was one

of the top students. Instead, she was assigned to work in the dressing room. She recalls dancer Arthur Mitchell's advice to PA's African American dance students; and reflects upon the impact of her dance training on her later career. Jackson McCabe was also mentored by politician Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., whom she met through her father, Hal Jackson, who was a successful broadcaster in New York City. After earning a diploma from PA, Jackson McCabe matriculated at the majority-white Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, where she met her first husband, writer Frederick Ward. She majored in dance, and impressed the department head with her knowledge of labanotation. After one year, Jackson McCabe left Bard College to live with her husband in New York City's Greenwich Village. She also recalls her experiences as a switchboard operator.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_002_004, TRT: 0:29:37 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe served as a dance instructor in the mid-1960s, as part of a government funded program in New York City. After the program's employees worked for six weeks without pay, Jackson McCabe brought their complaints to city hall, where she was noticed by an administrator of the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA). She accepted a position as a receptionist at the HRA under director Jule Sugarman. There, she quickly became known for her writing ability, and was promoted to chief of staff of the HRA's Manpower and Career Development Agency under Commissioner Jack White. From there, she was hired by Manny Diaz to draft the budget narrative for the New York Urban Coalition; and, after being recommended by Ramona Ripston, succeeded Ripston as the coalition's public affairs director in 1971. Jackson McCabe also talks about the Commission on the Status of Women, and the political climate of the 1960s and 1970s.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_002_005, TRT: 0:29:38 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe was among the twenty-four founders of the Coalition of 100 Black Women in New York City. Established in the late 1960s, the organization also included Jackson McCabe's mother, Julia Hawkins Jackson; government official Anne Mason Roberts; and corporate executive Ernesta Procope. The coalition met on Thursday nights, and initially focused on voter registration. At this point in the interview, Jackson McCabe talks about the African American tradition of community service; and the historical erasure of black women's achievements, including those of activist Ida B. Wells, publisher Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and educator Mary McLeod Bethune. Jackson McCabe was also a founding member of David Rockefeller's Partnership for New York City in 1979. Through the organization, she met business executives like J. Bruce Llewellyn, one of the founders of the 100 Black Men of America, with whom she spoke about expanding the Coalition of 100 Black Women.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_002_006, TRT: 0:29:25 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe served as the New York Urban Coalition's public affairs director from 1971 to 1972. Upon Commissioner James Dumpson's recommendation, she became the press officer of the Special Services for Children under New York City Mayor John Lindsay's administration. She went on to work as the press officer of both Governor Hugh Carey's office and the Coalition of 100 Black Women in New York City. At this point in the interview, Jackson McCabe reflects upon her career, and her admiration of Governor

Carey's administration, which created the Emergency Financial Control Board, and elevated the status of women in New York State. In 1977, Jackson McCabe became the press officer for New York City's WNET-TV, and was elected president of the Coalition of 100 Black Women. In this role, she was instrumental in the organization's expansion from the founding chapter to the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, which took place in 1981. She also describes her membership recruitment strategy.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_003_007, TRT: 0:29:26 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe's mother, Julia Hawkins Jackson, was a founding member of the Coalition of 100 Black Women in New York City in 1970. With her, Jackson McCabe attended the coalition's first meetings, which focused on the needs of middle class black women. Jackson McCabe ascended to the presidency in the late 1970s; and, in this role, expanded the organization to the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, which officially launched in 1981. In addition, through her work as the public affairs director of the New York Urban Coalition, Jackson McCabe helped develop the Give a Damn newsletter to disseminate information about housing, employment, health and education to the citizens of New York City. At this point in the interview, Jackson McCabe talks about white male leaders, the history of service in the black community, her political values and her skill set. She also reflects upon the influence of her parents and their friends, including Pittsburgh Courier writer Stanley Roberts, on her worldview.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_003_008, TRT: 0:27:38 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe founded the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, the nationwide counterpart of the original Coalition of 100 Black Women, which was based in New York. In 1993, Jackson McCabe became the first black woman to be shortlisted for the NAACP presidency. She was supported by organizations like the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs and The Links; along with male leaders like business executive Richard Parsons, NAACP Legal Defense Fund chief executive Julius Chambers and Equitable Life Assurance Society of America CEO Coy Eklund. She and fellow candidate Reverend Jesse L. Jackson were ultimately defeated by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. At this point in the interview, Jackson McCabe describes the challenges she faced during her campaign, including issues related to her identity as an African American woman. She also talks about the political values that informed her candidacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_003_009, TRT: 0:28:44 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe became president of the New York based Coalition of 100 Black Women in 1978. In this role, she collaborated with businessmen and philanthropists James D. Robinson, III and Laurance Rockefeller to organize a centennial fundraiser for Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. To further support young African American women's social and career development, Jackson McCabe established two role modeling programs, Career Explorations and Women in Partnership: Young Black Women in Transition, in collaboration with Reverend Bernice Powell Jackson. Following the founding of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women in 1981, Jackson McCabe created the Candace Award to recognize the accomplishments of black women. In 1993, she became the first female contender for the NAACP presidency, which was ultimately won by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. Jackson McCabe describes her criticism of Chavis,

Jr. and Minister Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March in 1995, particularly for its exclusion of African American women.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_003_010, TRT: 0:29:16 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe founded the National Coalition of 100 Black Women in 1981. After attending the Aspen Institute Executive Seminar, she organized a leadership seminar tailored to young African American women. She invited businesswomen like Dolores D. Wharton, Suzanne de Passe and Marian Wright Edelman to speak; and commissioned historian Paula Giddings and economist Julianne Malveaux to write scholarly articles on black women's earning power and the black community's response to female leaders. She also authorized a survey about African American female leadership, which asked respondents to identify three black women. In the late 1980s, Jackson McCabe became the first woman and first African American to serve on the board of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. In this position, she developed an international studies program, and was tasked with recruiting African American female students. Jackson McCabe also describes the corporate board selection process and her international travels.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_003_011, TRT: 0:29:06 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe was the founder of Jewell Jackson McCabe Associates, an executive coaching company based in New York City. Her clients included The Coca-Cola Company, for which she led focus groups on health and wellness at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia; and the Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., for which she developed a film education program called the Panasonic Kid Witness News. In addition, Jackson McCabe was the founder of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. She describes her goals for the organization, including her intention to strengthen the coalition's membership. She reflects upon her professional opportunities, and how she would like to be remembered. She also talks about food traditions in the African American community, and the impact of a nearly fatal car accident on her life philosophy.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section A2007_181_003_012, TRT: 0:16:11 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_001, TRT: 0:29:42 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe was born on August 2, 1945 in Washington, D.C. to Julia Hawkins Jackson and Hal Jackson. Her paternal grandparents were descended from the Gullah people of James Island, and lived in Charleston, South Carolina, where her grandfather was a tailor for the U.S. Navy. They had six children, the youngest of whom was Jackson McCabe's father. He attended the Troy Conference Academy in Poultney, Vermont, and graduated from Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. While enrolled at Howard University, he began his broadcasting career as a hockey reporter for WINX Radio. He went on to host 'The House That Jack Built,' and collaborated with the songwriting team of Nesuhi Ertegun and Ahmet Ertegun. Jackson McCabe's maternal grandmother, Erceer Ricks, was born to a freed slave and a wealthy landowner's son in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Jackson McCabe's mother grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and met Jackson McCabe's father in Washington, D.C. She also describes her father's first wife.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_001E, TRT:

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_002, TRT: 0:30:15 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe's father, Hal Jackson, was briefly wedded to the mother of her older half-sister, Jane Jackson Harley. He then married Jackson McCabe's mother, and they moved to a home on East Capitol Street in Washington, D.C. There, Jackson McCabe had a privileged upbringing. As a toddler, she was carried on a satin pillow to meet her parents' famous guests, like singer Nat King Cole, Dr. Charles R. Drew and basketball player William "Dolly" King. Her mother was the assistant to administrator Anne Mason Roberts of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; while her father worked in the broadcasting industry, and owned the Washington Bears basketball team. He often traveled for work to New York City, where Jackson McCabe and her family moved in 1955. She also talks about her older brother, Harold B. Jackson, Jr., who served as a circuit court judge in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and reads the introduction to her father's autobiography, written by Atlantic Records founder Ahmet Ertegun.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_002E, TRT:

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_003, TRT: 0:30:50 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe was born in 1945 at her parents' home on East Capitol Street in Washington, D.C., and was named for the wife of the physician who delivered her. Her father, Hal Jackson, was a successful broadcasting entrepreneur and basketball team owner. He traveled to New York City during the week, and returned home to Washington, D.C. on Sundays, when her family cooked elaborate meals. At this point in the interview, Jackson McCabe describes her family's food traditions, and her early sense of responsibility. She began her education at Washington, D.C.'s Park View Elementary School, and her dance training at the Jones-Haywood School of Ballet. Then, in 1955, Jackson McCabe moved with her mother and maternal grandmother to the St. Albans neighborhood of Queens, New York, where she attended P.S. 136, Roy Wilkins School. She went on to attend New York City's High School of Performing Arts, where she focused on dance, and also learned to sew.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_003E, TRT:

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_004, TRT: 0:28:45 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe was accepted in 1960 to the dance department of New York City's High School of Performing Arts. There, she was trained in ballet and modern dance by members of the Bolshoi Ballet and the Martha Graham Dance Company. At this point in the interview, she talks about her admiration of African American dancers like Gus Solomons jr and Judith Jamison, and Russian ballerina Maya Plisetskaya. Around the time that Jackson McCabe began her sophomore year, the dance department head, Marjorie Dyke, began rudely commenting on her developing body. Later, Jackson McCabe was excluded from the senior year performance, despite her superior grades. She went on to attend Bard College, a predominantly white school in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, where she majored in dance. After one year, Jackson McCabe left school to marry Frederick Ward, with whom she moved to New York City's Greenwich Village. There, she worked in a variety of administrative roles, including as a receptionist and switchboard operator.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_004E, TRT:

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_005, TRT:

0:30:19 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe left Bard College after one year to marry Frederick Ward, with whom she moved to New York City. In 1965 and 1966, she taught dance to pregnant teenagers at Monsignor Robert J. Fox's Summer in the City program. On her mother's advice, she accepted a receptionist position at the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA) under Mayor John Lindsay. There, she met her second husband, Eugene L. McCabe, who was married at the time. She describes their trip to Haiti, where they filed for divorce from their previous spouses. Jackson McCabe received a promotion to chief of staff under Jack White, the commissioner of the HRA's Manpower and Career Development Agency; and, after a few years there, accepted a position at the Mobilization for Youth social service agency. She was then hired to write the New York Urban Coalition's budget narrative, before succeeding Ramona Ripston as the organization's public affairs director.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_005E, TRT:

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_006, TRT:
0:29:55 ?

Jewell Jackson McCabe's father, Hal Jackson, had a prolific career in radio broadcasting and philanthropy. He operated out of major stations in New York City, like WLIB Radio and WMAC Radio; and hosted the annual Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon, as well as a Sunday program called 'Frontiers of Faith,' which featured jazz musicians like Billy Taylor and Dizzy Gillespie. As a girl, Jackson McCabe helped her father deliver food to the hungry during the holidays. Her mother, Julia Hawkins Jackson, worked as the assistant to Anne Mason Roberts, a regional administrator of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, until Jackson McCabe was a teenager. At this point in the interview, Jackson McCabe recalls her mother's stroke, and her parents' divorce. In the 1970s, Jackson McCabe replaced Ramona Ripston as the New York Urban Coalition's public affairs director. She describes her early challenges as a manager, and names other successful businesspeople who did not graduate from college.

Video Oral History Interview with Jewell Jackson McCabe, Section B2007_181_001_006E, TRT: