

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Phyllis Hicks

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## 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>	Hicks, Phyllis, 1943-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Phyllis Hicks,
<b>Dates:</b>	October 5, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:17:51).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Nonprofit administrator and newspaper marketing director Phyllis Hicks (1943 - ) was the marketing director and columnist for the Omaha Star newspaper. She volunteered for thirty years for the Omaha Opportunities Industrialization Centers, Inc. Hicks was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 5, 2007, in Omaha, Nebraska. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_279
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Newspaper marketing director and nonprofit administrator Phyllis Jean Mosley Hicks was born on March 7, 1943 in Omaha, Nebraska to Juanita Agee Mosley and James P. Mosley, Jr. Hicks' civic-minded grandmother, Emma Lee Agee, was a 1919 member of the church pastored by Reverend Earl Little (Malcolm X's father) and was a childhood friend of the National Baptist Convention's controversial Reverend Joseph H. Jackson, as well as Whitney M. Young, Jr. Her paternal grandfather Rev. J. P. Mosley Sr. led a demonstration to integrate the swimming pools in 1954 in Chillicothe, Missouri. Whitney M. Young was president of the Omaha Urban League, where Hick's mother worked as his personal secretary. Her mother played trumpet in an all girl band and her father was a saxophone player. Hicks studied piano and voice for several years and she was a member of the Elks Drill Team. She attended Long and Howard Kennedy elementary schools. Hicks was a member of NAACP Youth Chapter, worked on the school paper and was a member of the journalism club and the yearbook staff at Omaha Technical High School. Graduating in 1961, she attended Peru State Teachers College.

Married in 1963, Hicks took a job with the Power Electric Company and volunteered for Omaha Opportunities Industrialization Centers, Inc. (OIC). Hired by OIC in 1967, she produced eight pageants for the organization in addition to serving in as instructor and in an administrative role for thirty years. Hicks joined Sitel Corporation in 1998 as a quality assurance representative and trainer. Employed at CSG Systems, Inc., she served as product support analyst through 2005 when she retired.

Marketing director for the "Omaha Star," the oldest and only African American newspaper in Omaha, Hicks also writes a column called "It's Just My Opinion" for the publication. She is the founder and mentor to "The Stepping Saints," a local drill team. Hicks is the recipient of the Woman of the Year, the Black Heritage Award, OIC's Thirty Year Service Award and the City of Omaha's Living the Dream Award at the 2002 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.

Phyllis Hicks was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 5, 2007.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Phyllis Hicks was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 5, 2007, in Omaha, Nebraska, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit administrator and newspaper marketing director Phyllis Hicks (1943 - ) was the marketing director and columnist for the Omaha Star newspaper. She volunteered for thirty years for the Omaha Opportunities Industrialization Centers, Inc.

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# 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®.

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# 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.

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# Controlled Access Terms

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

## Persons:

Hicks, Phyllis, 1943-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hicks, Phyllis, 1943- --Interviews

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African American businesspeople--Interviews.

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African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Nonprofit Administrator

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Newspaper Marketing Director

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|MediaMakers

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## 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 Phyllis Hicks, October 5, 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

## Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Phyllis Hicks, Section A2007\_279\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:14 ?

Phyllis Hicks was born on March 7, 1943 in Omaha, Nebraska to Juanita Agee Morrow and James Mosley, Jr. Her maternal great-great-grandmother, Emma Dumas Agee, was born free during the era of slavery; and, after marrying, moved to Magnolia, Alabama, where her children and grandchildren were born. Hicks' maternal grandmother, Emma Lee Sullivan, was born in 1907, and moved to Omaha with her mother in 1919. She was active in the National Baptist Convention, formed the city's first usher board at the Bethel Baptist Church under Pastor Joseph H. Jackson and founded a daycare for black children. Hicks' maternal grandmother also belonged to the church of Earl Little, Malcolm X's father, when the church was under threat from the Ku Klux Klan. Hicks' paternal grandfather, minister James Mosley, Sr., was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma. He founded Omaha's Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, and then moved to Missouri, where he preached in Chillicothe and Boonville. Hicks' parents met at Omaha's Technical High School.

African American families--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American churches--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American grandparents--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American parents--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American fathers--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American ministers--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American children--Nebraska--Omaha.

X, Malcolm, 1925-1965.

Racism.

Ku Klux Klan (1915-).

Political activists.

Demonstrations.

Video Oral History Interview with Phyllis Hicks, Section A2007\_279\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Phyllis Hicks' paternal grandfather, minister James Mosley, Sr., moved from Muskogee, Oklahoma to Omaha, Nebraska. There, her father, James Mosley, Jr., attended Technical High School, where he met Hicks' mother, Juanita Agee Morrow. Both were musically gifted, and her mother performed with a traveling all-girl band, while her father played saxophone in a military band. Hicks' father served for twenty-four years in the U.S. Army, and her mother became the secretary to Whitney Young of the National Urban League. Hicks grew up in Omaha, and often visited her family members in Colorado and Missouri. She began her education at Omaha's Long School under Principal Eugene Skinner, and transferred to Howard Kennedy Elementary School in the first grade. Hicks took voice lessons from Addie Foxall Hinton, and sang in the choir at Technical High School. Her stepfather, Hortense Harlin, worked for the Omaha Guide newspaper, and organized a boycott of The Coca-Cola Company because of their discriminatory hiring practices.

African American children--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American fathers.

African American families--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American musicians--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American neighborhoods--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American families--California--San Francisco.

African American parents.

Music.

Video Oral History Interview with Phyllis Hicks, Section A2007\_279\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:46 ?

Phyllis Hicks grew up in Omaha, Nebraska. Her family subscribed to Ebony and Jet magazines, and belonged to the St. Martin de Porres Club, a civil rights organization led by John P. Markoe. The group also included Paul Silas, a basketball star at Omaha's Creighton University. In Omaha, Hicks attended Technical High School, where she sang in the choir, and wrote for the newspaper and yearbook. She also participated in successful efforts to integrate Omaha's Crosstown Roller Rink and Peony Park. Hicks planned to attend Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee upon graduating from high school in 1961, but her mother forbade her from studying in the South. Instead, Hicks enrolled at Peru State Teachers College in Peru, Nebraska, where there were few black students. She endured her professors' unfair grading practices, the discrimination of her roommates' parents and her music instructors' attempts to whitewash her vocal style. In 1963, Hicks left school, and married Alonzo Hicks, who was her neighbor in Omaha.

African American children--Education (Elementary)--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American college students--Social conditions.

African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Nebraska--Omaha.

African Americans--Education (Higher)--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American mothers.

Lynching--Nebraska--History.

Peru State Teachers College.

Video Oral History Interview with Phyllis Hicks, Section A2007\_279\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:36 ?

Phyllis Hicks' maternal stepgrandfather, Charles Sullivan, lived in Omaha, Nebraska during the racial uprisings of 1919, when Will Brown, a black packinghouse worker, was lynched. Hicks did not learn about these events until her teenage years, when she was told by her stepgrandfather. Through her family, who were active in the National Baptist Convention, Hicks met Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the late 1950s. She married Alonzo Hicks in 1963, and went on to work for the Omaha Public Power District. Around 1967, she became a job training instructor at the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC), a program led by Leon Sullivan. She also wrote press releases for OIC, and produced a television program for Omaha's KETV-TV. From 1998, she worked as a trainer for the Sitel Corporation, a telemarketing firm. In 2005, Hicks joined the staff of the Omaha Star newspaper, where she wrote articles about price gouging by a local gas station, and the lack of musical education for African American children.

African American grandparents.

Lynching--Nebraska--History.

African American businesspeople.

African American civic leaders.

Racism--Nebraska--Omaha--20th century.

African Americans--Nebraska--Omaha--Social life and customs.

Opportunities Industrialization Center (Philadelphia, Pa.).

African American newspapers--Nebraska.

Video Oral History Interview with Phyllis Hicks, Section A2007\_279\_001\_005, TRT: 0:19:55 ?

Phyllis Hicks worked at the Omaha Star offices on 24th Street, which was in the

historic African American commercial district of Omaha, Nebraska. There, the community included black-owned businesses like the Dreamland Ballroom and the Tuxedo Barber Shop. In 1969, many businesses on 24th Street were burned down in the riots that followed the police shooting of Vivian Young, a fourteen year old African American girl. In Omaha, Hicks belonged to numerous community organizations, including Black Empowerment, and a drill team that she founded for the youth at Salem Baptist Church. Hicks was married to Alonzo Hicks from 1963 until his death. Together, they raised one son, Wayne Hicks. Hicks talks about Omaha's Great Plains Black History Museum, which was run by historian Bertha Calloway from 1976 to 2001. She also reflects upon her hopes and concerns for the African American community, her life and legacy and how she would like to be remembered.

African American neighborhoods--Nebraska--Omaha.

Riots--Nebraska--Omaha--History--20th century.

African Americans--Nebraska--Omaha--Social life and customs.

African American businesspeople--Nebraska--Omaha.

Violence--Nebraska--Omaha--History--20th century.

African American women--Nebraska--Omaha.

African American women civic leaders--Nebraska--Omaha.

African Americans--Employment.