

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Rosalind Juanita Harris

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Harris, Rosalind Juanita, 1950-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Rosalind Juanita Harris,
Dates:	November 5, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:21:44).
Abstract:	Publisher Rosalind Juanita Harris (1950 -) was the owner, publisher and art director of the Denver Urban Spectrum, a free monthly news magazine for people of color. Harris also founded the Urban Spectrum Youth Foundation and Spectrum of Hope, a nonprofit organization that assisted displaced citizens in the Denver area. Harris was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 5, 2008, in Denver, Colorado. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_125
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Publisher Rosalind Juanita “Bee” Harris was born on March 19, 1950 in Grand Rapids, Michigan to Ruth Smith Boyd and Doyle James. Harris has attended the Davenport College of Business, the Patricia Stevens Career Schools, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

From 1975 to 1977, Harris worked as a cartographer for Omaha National Bank. She then became the owner and operator of Salt and Pepper Art Studios from 1977 through 1980, the year she relocated to Denver, Colorado with her two sons. After a brief stint working as a graphic artist for the Rees Printing Company, Harris was employed as a production artist for Colorado Homes and Lifestyles. Then, from 1982 to 1984, Harris worked as a graphic artist for DK Associates/Excel Services at Lowry Air Force Base, in Denver, Colorado. Since 1984, Harris has been the owner and operator of Production Plus/Spectrum Designs. In 1987, Harris became the owner, publisher, and art director of the *Denver Urban Spectrum*, a free monthly paper which covers stories of interest to people of color and has a distribution of 25,000 in the Denver area. With the launch of their new re-designed Web site, the Urban Spectrum’s primary focus is to connect people to people through their social network, ConnectMe. In 2000, Harris founded the Urban Spectrum Youth Foundation, a journalism program for youth ages 13 to 17. The Urban Spectrum Youth Foundation is designed to educate and train at-risk middle and high school students in the field of journalism. The foundation focuses on literacy and computer training for youth. The *Denver Urban Spectrum* and the Urban Spectrum Youth Foundation have received honors in journalism from the Colorado Association of Black Journalists including the Overall Excellence Award. Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Harris founded Spectrum of Hope, a nonprofit organization that focuses on displaced citizens in the Denver area.

Harris is an engaged member of the Denver community. She is an active member of the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, and serves on several boards including the Denver Metro Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, CoLoursTV and Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Company. Past board affiliations include the Girl Scouts Mile Hi

Council, the Five Points Business Association, Mothers and Daughters Inc., the Rocky Mountain Women's Institute, the Metro State College President's Community Advisory Council, and the Colorado Historical Society's African American Advisory Council. In addition, Harris was appointed by former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb to serve as a commissioner for Art, Culture, and Film.

Harris is a divorced mother of two adult sons and two grandsons.

Harris was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 6, 2008.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Rosalind Juanita Harris was conducted by Denise Gines on November 5, 2008, in Denver, Colorado, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Publisher Rosalind Juanita Harris (1950 -) was the owner, publisher and art director of the Denver Urban Spectrum, a free monthly news magazine for people of color. Harris also founded the Urban Spectrum Youth Foundation and Spectrum of Hope, a nonprofit organization that assisted displaced citizens in the Denver area.

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:

Harris, Rosalind Juanita, 1950-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Harris, Rosalind Juanita, 1950- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Publisher

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 Rosalind Juanita Harris, November 5, 2008. 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 Rosalind Juanita Harris, Section A2008_125_001_001, TRT: 0:29:29 ?

Rosalind Juanita Harris was born on March 19, 1950 in Grand Rapids, Michigan to Ruth Smith Boyd and Doyle James. Harris' paternal grandparents, Lula James and John James, had Native American and Irish roots; and raised several children, including Harris' father, in Amory, Mississippi. Harris' mother was also born in Amory, and met Harris' father at school. They married as teenagers, and moved with Harris' maternal grandparents, Avinger Smith and Neal Smith, to Grand Rapids. There, her father worked for the General Motors Corporation, while her mother raised six children, of whom Harris was the third born. Harris' family attended Grand Rapids' True Light Baptist Church, and initially lived in a three-bedroom house with fruit trees in the backyard, before moving to a larger home. Harris' father spent much of his time coaching a Little League baseball team, whose players later honored both Harris' parents at her father's seventieth birthday celebration.

Video Oral History Interview with Rosalind Juanita Harris, Section A2008_125_001_002, TRT: 0:29:21 ?

Rosalind Juanita Harris grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where her family attended the True Light Baptist Church. She was influenced from an early age by her mother, Ruth Smith Boyd, who emphasized education. Harris initially attended Grand Rapids' Maplewood School; and, after moving with her family to a larger home, transferred to the Franklin School. She went on to attend the St. Stephen Catholic School, where she heard the news of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy's assassination in 1963; and Ottawa High School, where she began working after class at local restaurants. During her sophomore year, Harris' parents divorced. She moved with her mother to another home in Grand Rapids, and transferred to South High School. There, Harris enjoyed learning calculus, and considered becoming a math teacher. During this time, many of her older sister's friends were killed in the Vietnam War. Harris also remembers the influence of Motown Records in Detroit, Michigan, and her family's holiday traditions.

Video Oral History Interview with Rosalind Juanita Harris, Section A2008_125_001_003, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Rosalind Juanita Harris graduated in 1969 from South High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and her son, Lawrence James, was born shortly afterwards. She briefly attended Grand Rapids' Davenport College of Business, and then moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she studied at the Patricia Stevens Career College. Harris later married and moved to Omaha, Nebraska, where she gave birth to her son, Donald James. She worked at the First National Bank of Omaha, before opening the Salt and Pepper Studios, a commercial art business, in 1976. Harris later married musician Leon Harris, and joined him in Denver, Colorado, where she worked as a freelance graphic designer and commercial artist. In 1987, Harris partnered with editor Robert Stewart and photographer Ron Ira Steele to found the Denver Urban Spectrum, a monthly newspaper about people of color in Denver. The publication was noted for its Black History Month issue, and received support from the community after its offices were destroyed by a fire in 1988.

Video Oral History Interview with Rosalind Juanita Harris, Section A2008_125_001_004, TRT: 0:28:25 ?

Rosalind Juanita Harris was the publisher of the Denver Urban Spectrum in Denver, Colorado. After the community experienced an increase of violence in

1993, she established the Urban Spectrum Youth Foundation to provide jobs and training opportunities for young people. In 1999, Harris covered Denver Mayor Wellington Webb's business delegation to West Africa, where she met a Senegalese man whom she later married. During her career as a newspaper publisher, Harris became acquainted with many prominent African Americans, including President Barack Obama. In 2008, she designed 'Barack Obama: Making History,' an anthology of articles from the Denver Urban Spectrum. Harris also served on the advisory board of the Shadow Theatre in Aurora, Colorado. She talks about the Denver Urban Spectrum's transition to a digital platform, and her intention to continue the publication's print distribution. Harris also describes her sons, Lawrence James and Donald James; and her grandsons, Tyrell James and Dillon James.

Video Oral History Interview with Rosalind Juanita Harris, Section A2008_125_001_005, TRT: 0:25:19 ?

Rosalind Juanita Harris describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community; and reflects upon her life, legacy and how she would like to be remembered. She also talks about the death of her mother, who had recently passed away at the time of the interview. Harris shares her plans for the future, and concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.