

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Agnes Day

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Day, Agnes, 1952-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Agnes Day,
Dates:	May 4, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:13:57).
Abstract:	Mycologist Agnes Day (1952 -) is an expert on drug- resistant fungi and breast cancer health disparities working in Howard University's College of Medicine. Day was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 4, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_085
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Microbiologist Agnes A. Day was born on July 20, 1952 in Americus, Georgia to Annie Lee Laster and David Laster. The youngest of thirteen children, Day was raised by her third-grade teacher, Reverend Mrs. Rose Marie Bryon. Day's interest in science began when she and her older brother would walk through the woods catching insects and animals. After graduating from Mainland Sr. High School, Day attended Bethune-Cookman College in Florida where she received her B.S. degree in biology. Day then attended Howard University, graduating with her Ph.D. degree in microbiology in 1984.

After obtaining her graduate degree, Day became a research fellow in the Bone Research Branch at the National Institute of Dental Research, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She left in 1988 to join the faculty at Howard University as an assistant professor. Since 1992, Day has served as a tenured associate professor of microbiology in the College of Medicine at Howard University. She also has held the position of chair of the department of microbiology. In addition to instructing students in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and coordinating graduate courses, Day is known for her research on drug-resistant fungi and breast cancer health disparities. She serves as a Scientific Reviewer for research grants submitted to the National Institutes of Health, The National Science Foundation and the Department of Defense Cancer Research Initiatives. Day is in demand as a science expert, having been interviewed as part of a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) special and TheGrio's *Black History* series. In addition, she has served on numerous panels as a scientific expert in microbiology and breast cancer research.

In 1995, Day was awarded the Outstanding Research Award by the Howard University College of Medicine. She has also received the College's Kaiser-Permanente Outstanding Teaching Award, and has mentored over forty students. Day is a member of the American Association for Cancer Research and sits on its Minorities in Cancer Research and Women in Cancer Research committees. She is also a member of the American Society for Microbiology where she is a member of the Committee on Microbiological Issues which Impact Minorities (CMIIM). Day received the William A. Hinton Award for outstanding research mentoring from this organization in

2011. She also served as a consultant for the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Black Churches-Black Colleges program. Day lives in Washington, D.C.

Agnes Day was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 4, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Agnes Day was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 4, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Mycologist Agnes Day (1952 -) is an expert on drug-resistant fungi and breast cancer health disparities working in Howard University's College of Medicine.

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:

Day, Agnes, 1952-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Day, Agnes, 1952- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Mycologist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 Agnes Day, May 4, 2012. 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 Agnes Day, Section A2012_085_001_001, TRT: 1:29:13 ?

Agnes Day's describes her family background. Day's mother, Annie Lee Harvey, was born in Sumter County, Georgia around 1908. Day's father, Robert David Laster, was born in Plains, Georgia around 1900. Day's family worked as

sharecroppers on the family farm of U.S. President Jimmy Carter in Plains, Georgia. Day's father left the farm when she was a baby to seek a better life. When he did not return a year later, Day's mother sought him out in Deerfield Beach, Florida, and relocated her thirteen children to Daytona Beach. Day recalls stories from her life and family, and talks about being the youngest of her siblings.

African American families.

Sharecroppers--Georgia.

Carter, Jimmy, 1924---Family--Georgia--Plains.

Children of sharecroppers.

African Americans—Migrations.

Video Oral History Interview with Agnes Day, Section A2012_085_001_002, TRT: 2:28:25 ?

Agnes Day describes the sights, sounds, and smells of her childhood such as her mother's garden, bus exhaust, and the sound of the belt. As a child, Day once received four beatings after her attempt to melt sugar and make candy for the family failed. She attended Bonner Elementary School in Daytona Beach, Florida, but due to school overcrowding, her day began at noon. Schools were segregated for the most part, and Day recalls the founding of Bethune-Cookman College for African American students. In first grade, Day met third grade teacher, Rose Marie Bryan, who was instrumental in establishing equal pay for black and white teachers in Daytona Beach. Ms. Bryan recognized young Day's potential and took responsibility for her future. In third grade, Day moved in with Ms. Bryan and lived as one of her foster children.

Childhood and youth--Daytona Beach (Fla.).

Segregation in education--Florida.

Bethune-Cookman College (Daytona Beach, Fla.).

Discrimination in employment.

Teachers--Salaries, etc.--Florida.

Video Oral History Interview with Agnes Day, Section A2012_085_001_003, TRT: 3:30:06 ?

Agnes Day talks about Rose Marie Bryan and her foster children who all came from stressful backgrounds. Bryan started an organization called 'Children's Crusade for Christ' and raised money to build the Children's Center, a safe space for youth to learn and play. For Day, life with Ms. Bryan was extremely disciplined and she recalls having to scrub the floors on her hands and knees. Day was torn between a safe life with Ms. Bryan and going back to live with her mother, Annie Lee Harvey. During the summers, Day worked at vacation bible school at the Children's Center in exchange for a small allowance. As a high school student, she was smart and likeable, and had a good reputation as a Laster. Day talks about wearing an afro secretly because Ms. Bryan did not want her foster children participating in the Civil Rights Movement.

Teacher-student relationships.

Foster children--Care.

Foster children--Family relationships.

Child welfare--United States.

Hairstyles--Social aspects--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Agnes Day, Section A2012_085_001_004, TRT: 4:29:34 ?

As a part of school integration, Agnes Day moved from Campbell High School to Mainland High School in eleventh grade. She realized the fallacy of "separate but equal" when she got to the white school and had to catch up academically.

Day became a successful student and decided to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C. after a recruiter visited her high school. There, Day developed a fungal disease called histoplasmosis and was forced to transfer out of Howard when her grades dropped too low to keep her scholarship. She went to Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida, met her husband, John Day, and brought her grades up to a GPA of 4.0. After taking a bacteriology class during her senior year, Day dropped her plans for medical school and decided to pursue a Master's degree in microbiology at Howard University.

Discrimination in education--Law and legislation--United States.

Histoplasmosis.

African American college students--Scholarships, fellowships, etc.

Bacteriology--Study and teaching.

Microbiology--Study and teaching (Higher)--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Agnes Day, Section A2012_085_001_005, TRT: 5:29:33 ?

Agnes Day successfully completed her master's degree in microbiology at Howard University and decided to continue there, ultimately becoming the program's first doctoral student. She preferred the creativity that scientific research allowed over the formulaic approach of physicians. Her doctoral dissertation examined the fungus *Cryptococcus neoformans*, and its resistance to drugs by building up a thickened cell wall. This research led to the quest for better anti-fungal drugs. During graduate school, Day was mentored by Dr. Lena Austin, who taught her to become the outspoken, questioning scientist that she is today. After earning her Ph.D. degree in microbiology, Day turned her summer job at the National Institute for Dental Research into a full-time staff fellowship where she was introduced to molecular biology and protein cloning. In 1988, Day returned to Howard University as a faculty member and dedicated herself to improving the department.

Howard University.

Doctoral students.

Cryptococcus neoformans.

Microbiology--Study and teaching (Higher)--United States.

National Institute of Dental Research (U.S.).

Video Oral History Interview with Agnes Day, Section A2012_085_001_006, TRT: 6:28:55 ?

Agnes Day explains her decision to return to Howard University as an assistant research professor, and describes the talent there, including HistoryMakers Georgia Mae Dunston and Dr. Floyd Malveaux. In 1992, Day was promoted to become an associate professor, and began researching breast cancer and African American women's susceptibility to the disease. Day discusses the risks associated with the incidence of skin cancer and her research on heritable and acquired skin diseases, including Marfan syndrome and Xeroderma pigmentosa (XP). She also discusses possible reasons for the increased incidence of breast cancer, prostate cancer and sickle cell disease in African American populations. In 2003, Day appeared on the PBS television series, 'Closer to the Truth', where she talked about the war against microbes. Day discusses native bacteria that help to maintain a healthy homeostasis in our bodies, and talks about the negative effects of the excessive use of antibacterial agents.

Howard University--Faculty.

Breast--Cancer--Research.

Skin--Diseases.

African Americans--Health and hygiene.

Closer to truth (Television program).

Video Oral History Interview with Agnes Day, Section A2012_085_001_007, TRT: 7:18:11 ?

Agnes Day talks about her scientific publications and her research interests, one of which was breast cancer. Unfortunately, at age thirty-four, Day's daughter, Theresa Denise, was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer. When her daughter was going through chemotherapy, Day showed her support by shaving her head to raise awareness about the risk of breast cancer in African American women. Day then reflects upon her legacy as a facilitator. Throughout her life, she has helped young people reach their dreams through education. Day, however is concerned that young people today lack focus and a sense of responsibility. She also recalls the death of her brother, Larry, in 1990. Day concludes the interview by sharing how she would like to be remembered.

Breast--Cancer--Diagnosis.

Breast--Cancer--Chemotherapy.

Breast--Cancer--Patients.

African American women--Health and hygiene.

Brothers and sisters--Death.