

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Pam Morris

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Morris, Pam
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Pam Morris,
Dates:	January 23, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:59:57).
Abstract:	Radio host Pam Morris (1949 -) , founder of P. Morris & Associates, is the host of WVON-AM's "Gospel with Pam Morris," and was head producer for the Chicago Gospel Music Festival for over twenty years. She is the author of the book <i>Lessons Learned from Aunt Mabel and So Much More</i> . Morris-Walton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 23, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_023
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Radio host Pam Morris was born and raised in West Virginia. She graduated from St. Albans High School and West Virginia State College.

In 1989, Morris was appointed by Mayor Richard M. Daley as an event coordinator for the City of Chicago and as head producer for the Chicago Gospel Music Festival. Morris also created and coordinated Mayor Daley's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Breakfast. She went on to serve as interfaith liaison for the United States House of Representatives in the Second District of Illinois.

In 2000, Morris was hired as a radio personality at WVON-AM in Chicago, where she went on to host "Gospel with Pam Morris." She worked at WWHN 1510-AM and WGCI-AM; and, for seven years, hosted the radio program entitled "The Inspirational Gospel Stroll," on WVAZ-FM. Morris also hosted "Gospel with Pam Morris" on cable television. In addition, she has worked as an international Gospel consultant for The Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy; The Gospel and Soul Easter Festival in Terni, Italy; and The Tree of Life Gospel Event in Durbin, South Africa. She served as a consultant to the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and was appointed lead ambassador for the American Heart Association's Most Powerful Voices Gospel Tour. In 2009, Morris retired as event coordinator for the City of Chicago and founded the nonprofit organization P. Morris & Associates.

Morris has received numerous awards for her work. She was the 2006 Stellar Award recipient for Gospel Radio announcer of the year. She also received the 2010 Who's Who in Black Chicago Award; the 2010 Living Faith Church Lifetime Achievement Legacy Award; the City of Chicago Appreciation Award; the 2012 National Council of Negro Women Media Award; and N'Digo's N'Religion Award. Morris also served on the Grammy Board of Governors of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences - Chicago Chapter.

Morris has recorded two Gospel albums, and is the author of the book *Lessons Learned from Aunt Mabel and So*

Much More.

Pam Morris was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 23, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Pam Morris was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 23, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Radio host Pam Morris (1949 -) , founder of P. Morris & Associates, is the host of WVON-AM's "Gospel with Pam Morris," and was head producer for the Chicago Gospel Music Festival for over twenty years. She is the author of the book Lessons Learned from Aunt Mabel and So Much More.

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:

Morris, Pam

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Morris, Pam--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Radio Host

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 Pam Morris, January 23, 2014. 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 Pam Morris, Section A2014_023_001_001, TRT: 1:28:49 ?

Pam Morris was born on December 20, 1949 in Charleston, West Virginia to Paskalena Page and John Brown. Morris' maternal grandfather, Herman Page, received a Purple Heart in World War II. He worked in the mines and operated a

shoe repair business. Morris' mother dropped out of high school at age seventeen after she became pregnant. Like her seven siblings, Morris' mother later attended West Virginia State College in Institute, West Virginia which became integrated while she was a student. Morris never met her father, a ROTC instructor who already had his own family. Morris was raised on a farm by her great aunts, Mabel and Pearlie Page, and her great grandfather, Burl Page. Aunt Mabel pastored the Apostolic Free Church of God on Redds Hill in St. Albans, West Virginia and later become a bishop. Morris describes characteristics of the Apostolic Free Church and Aunt Mabel's influence on her. She also talks about her childhood memories and the sights, sounds, and smells of growing up in St. Albans.

Video Oral History Interview with Pam Morris, Section A2014_023_001_002, TRT: 2:28:20 ?

Pam Morris grew up on the Page family farm in St. Albans, West Virginia. As a child, she planted vegetables in the garden. Raised in a conservative household, Morris' childhood revolved around church and school. She was not allowed to date, her family only listened to church music, and television in the home was largely limited to "General Hospital," "Guiding Light" and Ted Koppel's "Nightline". The family also subscribed to Ebony, Jet, and National Geographic magazines. Morris attended Tackett Creek Elementary School and St. Albans High School which only had a few black students. As a child, Morris did not know what it meant to be black. Morris' Uncle Beauford, who was the same age, was rebellious. Morris describes her great Aunt Mabel's church, the Apostolic Free Church of God. Aunt Mabel supported the Civil Rights Movement, but did not take an active role. Morris was a popular and studious student in high school who took classes at West Virginia State College in Institute, West Virginia as a senior.

Video Oral History Interview with Pam Morris, Section A2014_023_001_003, TRT: 3:29:13 ?

Pam Morris worked her grandfather's store while at St. Albans High School in St. Albans, West Virginia. She entered West Virginia State College in Institute, Virginia, as a communications major in 1967. Morris continued to live at home, did not participate in the campus life, and remained active in her home church. She discovered her affinity for radio while working as a production assistant at a college radio station. Morris dropped out of college after two years and moved to New York where she tried to reform her mother, a barmaid and card player. She returned to West Virginia in 1969 and married John Morris who later became a preacher. Morris describes life as a young mother and a minister's wife, and recording an album with her husband. In 1975, the Morrises moved to Chicago, Illinois where Morris started working at Charles Sherrell's radio station before she was hired by HistoryMaker Barry Mayo at V103. Morris talks about Chicago's gospel music scene and the importance of prayer in her life.

Video Oral History Interview with Pam Morris, Section A2014_023_001_004, TRT: 4:28:14 ?

Pam Morris was hired by Charles Sherrell for a Sunday gospel radio program in the mid-1970s. She recalls the program's content and its sponsors. Morris was briefly at KJLH, Stevie Wonder's radio station in Los Angeles, California. Gospel radio hosts in the 1970s included Jackie Haselrig on V103 and Taft Harris of Crawford Broadcasting. As a radio host, Morris met gospel music personalities like Thomas Dorsey, the Barrett Sisters, Mahalia Jackson, and Albertina Walker. As her popularity rose, Morris hosted programs and events in churches and venues across the city. She describes selecting music for her programs and the role of gospel music in Harold Washington's mayoral campaign. She also talks about her radio career in the 1980s, from being hired by HistoryMaker Barry Mayo of V103 in 1982 to her appointment as the Special

Events Coordinator for the Chicago Gospel Music Festival in 1989. Morris talks about her visits to Aunt Mabel as an adult, and her close relationship to HistoryMaker Juanita Passmore.

Video Oral History Interview with Pam Morris, Section A2014_023_001_005, TRT: 5:30:06 ?

Pam Morris meeting gospel legends like Mahalia Jackson, Albertina Walker and the Barrett Sisters. In 1989, Morris became the Special Events Coordinator for the Chicago Gospel Music Festival, recruiting performers like Doc McKenzie and the Highlights, Solomon Burke, Rance Allen, and Andrae Crouch. She also created a volunteer advisory committee of civic leaders. Morris talks about other festivals in the city including the Chicago Blues Festival, the Chicago Jazz Festival, and the Taste of Chicago. Prayer has played a significant role in Morris' life. HistoryMaker Reverend Clay Evans prayed for the Chicago Gospel Music Festival in its planning stages and Morris broadcasted prayers and sermons as a radio host. She describes the political and civic engagement of ministers around the city, An Evening of Gospel Elegance, genres within gospel music, and the gospel music business. After twenty years with the Chicago Gospel Music Festival, Morris felt prompted by the spirit of her Aunt Mabel to resign in 2009.

Video Oral History Interview with Pam Morris, Section A2014_023_001_006, TRT: 6:35:15 ?

Pam Morris served as Special Events Coordinator of the Chicago Gospel Music Festival from 1989 to 2009. Throughout her tenure, Morris navigated contractual challenges and adapted to different modes of leadership. After retiring from the festival, Morris served as a gospel consultant for events like the Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. In 2006, Morris wrote a booklet about her Aunt Mabel, "Lessons Learned from Aunt Mabel and So Much More." Morris describes her relationship with her mother and her two sons, John and Kenneth Morris. Honored with many awards throughout her career, Morris is the recipient of the N'digo Religion Award and Chicago Defender's Women of Excellence Award. Morris talks about hosting a radio show on WVON1690-The Talk of Chicago and her plans to release an inspirational record. Morris reflects upon what she would do differently, her legacy, and how she would like to be remembered. She concludes the interview with her photographs.