

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jean Boone

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Boone, Jean, 1943- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jean Boone, |
| Dates: | December 9, 2016 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2016 |
| Physical Description: | 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:47:58). |
| Abstract: | Newspaper publishing executive Jean Boone (1943 -) founded the Richmond Free Press in 1992 with her husband Raymond Boone, Sr., serving as the newspaper's advertising director until 2014 when she was named publisher following her husband's death. Boone was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 9, 2016, in Richmond, Virginia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2016_145 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Newspaper executive Jean Boone was born on March 14, 1943 in Columbia, South Carolina to Helen Patterson and Daniel Patterson. Boone graduated from C.A. Johnson High School in Columbia in 1960, and went on to earn her B.A. degree in sociology and anthropology from Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1962. She then received her M.S. degree in social work in 1966 from Boston University.

After graduating from Boston University, Boone moved to Richmond, Virginia, where her husband, Raymond Boone, Sr., was editor of the *Richmond Afro-American*. She became an adjunct professor of education at Virginia Commonwealth University. She also worked as the associate director for housing and economic development for the Urban League of Richmond. In 1981, Boone joined the Children's Defense Fund as the director of state and local affairs, serving until 1989. In 1988, Boone also served as the manager of community affairs and marketing for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. When Boone's husband established Paradigm Communications, Inc. in 1991, Boone joined him as advertising director. The following year, Paradigm Communications, Inc. published the inaugural issue of the *Richmond Free Press* on January 16, 1992. Boone was named publisher of the *Richmond Free Press* in late June 2014 by the board of directors of Paradigm Communications, Inc. after her husband's death.

Under the leadership of Boone and her late husband, the *Richmond Free Press*' accomplishments were recognized by the Virginia Press Association, the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the NAACP and the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus. In 2001, the newspaper was the recipient of the Best in Commercial Renovation Award in recognition of its leadership during a downtown revitalization project. Boone was honored by the YWCA of Greater Richmond with the 2004 Outstanding Women in Communications Award and at Hattitude 2016: Hats Off to Women, which was hosted by the American Business Women's Association. Boone served on the board of Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc.

Boone and her late husband, Raymond Boone, Sr., had two children, Regina and Raymond Jr., and a grandson named Raymond III.

Jean Boone was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 9, 2016.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jean Boone was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 9, 2016, in Richmond, Virginia, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Newspaper publishing executive Jean Boone (1943 -) founded the Richmond Free Press in 1992 with her husband Raymond Boone, Sr., serving as the newspaper's advertising director until 2014 when she was named publisher following her husband's death.

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:

Boone, Jean, 1943-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Boone, Jean, 1943---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Newspaper Publishing Executive

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 Jean Boone, December 9, 2016. 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 Jean Boone, Section A2016_145_001_001, TRT: 1:28:46 ?

Jean Boone was born on March 14, 1943 in Columbia, South Carolina to Helen

Patterson and Daniel Patterson. Her mother was born in Union County, South Carolina in 1903, and moved to Columbia, South Carolina to further her education. She attended a normal school for two years, and then became a librarian at Columbia's Benedict College. Boone's father was born in 1898 in rural Fairfield County, South Carolina, and later moved to Columbia. Prior to Boone's birth, her parents had two daughters: Phyllis Patterson, who was born in 1927, and another daughter who died of appendicitis at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Boone's father passed away when she was four years old. She was raised by her mother and older sister in the Waverly neighborhood of Columbia, which was a thriving middle class black community. There, they attended the Second Calvary Baptist Church. Boone began her education at Waverly Elementary School, and loved reading and grammar from an early age.

Video Oral History Interview with Jean Boone, Section A2016_145_001_002, TRT: 2:28:46 ?

Jean Boone attended C.A. Johnson High School in Columbia, South Carolina. There, she belonged to the yearbook club, where she sold advertising space to local businesses. Around this time, she learned about the social work profession from an older cousin. After graduating from high school in 1960, Boone enrolled at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, where the student sit-in movement was underway. Boone was sympathetic to the protests, but avoided the sit-ins out of fear of jeopardizing her academic pursuits. Frustrated by the conservative environment at Bennett College, Boone transferred after two years to Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she studied sociology and anthropology. Encouraged by civil rights leader Lester Granger, she enrolled in the graduate social work program at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts. There, she met activists like Hubie Jones and Dr. Alvin Poussaint, and became an organizer for the United South End Settlements.

Video Oral History Interview with Jean Boone, Section A2016_145_001_003, TRT: 3:29:45 ?

Jean Boone worked for Melvin King at the United South End Settlements while studying at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts. During the summer, she interned with the Greater Washington Urban League in Washington, D.C. There, she met Raymond H. Boone, a journalist with the Afro-American Newspapers, when he attempted to contact her supervisor, Sterling Tucker. The couple married in 1966, and moved to Richmond, Virginia. There, Boone served as the associate director of the Urban League of Greater Richmond, where she worked to improve public housing and education in Richmond's Fulton Hill community. In 1969, she became a professor of social work at Virginia Commonwealth University. In 1977, Boone moved with her family to Baltimore, Maryland, where she worked at the Baltimore Blueprint, a social policy partnership between the federal and local government. From 1981 to 1989, Boone commuted to Washington, D.C. for her work at the Children's Defense Fund.

Video Oral History Interview with Jean Boone, Section A2016_145_001_004, TRT: 4:27:09 ?

Jean Boone left the Baltimore Blueprint in 1981, when the program lost its federal funding. She then became the director of state and local affairs for the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C., where she worked closely with Marian Wright Edelman. In this capacity, Boone advocated for children's welfare in Virginia, Texas and Florida. In 1989, Boone became the manager of community affairs and marketing for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. She worked to attract a younger and more diverse audience by offering affordable tickets through nonprofit organizations in the city. She also encouraged the orchestra to feature black composers and performers like the Boys Choir of

Harlem. In 1991, Boone moved to Richmond, Virginia to help her husband, Raymond H. Boone, found the Richmond Free Press. At this point in the interview, Boone talks her husband's family, including his father, Tsujiro Miyazaki, who was imprisoned in an internment camp during World War II, and never returned.

Video Oral History Interview with Jean Boone, Section A2016_145_001_005, TRT: 5:30:54 ?

Jean Boone worked closely with her husband, Raymond H. Boone, to found the Richmond Free Press in Richmond, Virginia in 1991. At the time, the city's media was dominated by the politically conservative Richmond Times-Dispatch, which had been a proponent of segregation. The Richmond Free Press was intended to provide broadly relevant news coverage, while also addressing issues of concern to the black community. To fund the project, Boone and her husband established Paradigm Communications, Inc. with support from twenty investors, including historian Robert C. Hayden. As the paper's advertising director, Boone developed relationships with entities like the Comcast Corporation, AARP Inc. and the local church community. Within five years, the organization became financially stable. The paper took strong editorial stances in support of non-specific gender references in the Virginia Supreme Court, and against the racist comments of Judge Ralph Robertson. They also supported Tim Kaine from the start of his career.

Video Oral History Interview with Jean Boone, Section A2016_145_001_006, TRT: 6:22:38 ?

Jean Boone was active in national and local politics through the Richmond Free Press in Richmond, Virginia. The newspaper endorsed the mayoral campaigns of L. Douglas Wilder in 2004 and Dwight Jones in 2008, as well as the presidential campaigns of Barack Obama. Boone and her husband, Raymond H. Boone, also supported the Occupy Wall Street movement, offering space to protesters following their eviction from the Kanawha Plaza in Richmond. After her husband's death in 2014, Boone became more involved in the paper's editorial process. Her children also worked for the organization: her daughter, Regina Boone, was a photographer, while her son, Raymond H. Boone, Jr., worked in management. At this point, Boone talks about the future of the paper, and describes its current staff. She also reflects upon her life and her husband's legacy, and the political climate in Virginia. Boone concludes the interview by describing her hopes and concerns for the African American community, and how she would like to be remembered.