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Bridgeport's Geraldine Johnson to be interviewed for national African-American history archive

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Geraldine W. Johnson of Bridgeport is well known for her years of hard work and dedication to the school system and the community.

Now The HistoryMakers, a national nonprofit video archive of African-American history, is coming to Bridgeport to make sure Johnson's story is included in a collection that includes the video oral history interviews of President Barack Obama, Gen. Colin Powell, Marion Wright Edelman and almost 2,000 other people from across the United States and abroad.



Geraldine Johnson

Johnson, 91, was the first female and first African-American school superintendent in Bridgeport from 1976 to 1981. Earlier, she had been the first female and African-American school principal in Bridgeport. She later served as Fairfield interim school superintendent.

A few years ago, a new city public school off North Avenue was named after Johnson, who remains active in the community and lives at The Watermark at 3030 Park retirement community.

While in Connecticut, The HistoryMakers also will interview multi-cultural educator Donald George in New Haven and investment executive Gwendolyn Smith Iloani in Hartford.

Julieanna L. Richardson, founder and executive director of The HistoryMakers, said the goal is to archive the oral histories of 5,000 African-Americans on digital video. The HistoryMakers previously interviewed Peter Hurst, chief executive officer of The Community's Bank in Bridgeport.

According to HistoryMakers publicity material, not since the recording of former slaves during the WPA Movement of the 1930s has there been a methodic and wide-scale attempt to capture the testimonies of African-Americans.

The content of The HistoryMakers archive is accessible on its Web site at thehistorymakers.com.

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