



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Donna M. Mendes

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dr. Donna M. Mendes
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Donna M. Mendes,
Dates:	March 28, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:46:56).
Abstract:	Medical professor and vascular surgeon Dr. Donna M. Mendes (1951 -) became the first African American female vascular surgeon certified by the American Board of Surgery. Mendes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 28, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_116
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Medical professor and vascular surgeon Dr. Donna M. Mendes was born to Benjamin and Bernice Mendes on October 25, 1951. The second of three children raised in Oceanside, New York, Mendes attended Hofstra University in New York in 1969. With the help of her parents and Hofstra University counselor, Beatryce Nivens, Mendes became a pre-med major and graduated from Hofstra University in 1973 with her B.A. in biology. In 1973, Mendes enrolled in Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. Mendes chose to study peripheral vascular surgery, which is the treatment of the vessels that branch out of the heart. Mendes graduated the following year and became an intern at St. Luke's Hospital and a visiting clinical fellow at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. She became a resident at St. Luke's in 1978, and a surgical resident two years later. In 1981, Mendes was promoted to surgical chief resident at St. Luke's Hospital, and served as a fellow in vascular surgery at Englewood Hospital in 1982. After completing her vascular surgery fellowship, Mendes returned to St. Luke's Hospital and became an instructor in clinical surgery at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons.

In 1986, Mendes married her husband, Ronald LaMotte, and became the first African American female vascular surgeon certified by the American Board of Surgery. Mendes' clinical research has focused on the effects of race on vascular disease, and she seeks to discover why peripheral arterial disease (blockages of blood vessels away from the heart) seems to impact African American patients more frequently, and with greater severity.

In 1990, Mendes became assistant clinical professor of surgery at Columbia University. She was hired as the chief of St. Luke's Hospital's Division of Vascular Surgery in 1993. Five years later, Mendes had become the senior attending surgeon in the Department of Surgery at St. Luke's, and was hired as the attending vascular surgeon at the Department of Surgery Lenox Hill Hospital in 1999.

Mendes lives in Englewood, New Jersey, with her husband.

Donna M. Mendes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 28, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Donna M. Mendes was conducted by Shawn Wilson on March 28, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. Medical professor and vascular surgeon Dr. Donna M. Mendes (1951 -) became the first African American female vascular surgeon certified by the American Board of Surgery.

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:

Mendes, Donna M.

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Mendes, Donna M.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

MedicalMakers

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 Dr. Donna M. Mendes, March 28, 2007. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/25/2011 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, March 28, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Donna M. Mendes, Section A2007_116_001_001, TRT: 0:29:53 2007/03/28

Donna Mendes, the middle child of three, discusses her family background. Her mother, Bernice Mendes, was born in Goosecreek, South Carolina, to Henrietha Smith and Theodore Bennet. Mendes remembers her mothers being a good

cook, and talks about the important role food played in her family. Mendes states that her father, Benjamin Andrew Mendes, was a hard worker. While her family always had nice things, she rarely saw her father. She recalls the community relationship in Long Island, New York, her educational experiences, and reflects on the Civil Rights Movement.

African American families--New York (state)--New York.

African American children--New York (state)--New York.

African American fathers--New York (state)--New York.

African American students--Education (elementary)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Donna M. Mendes, Section A2007_116_001_002, TRT: 0:29:31 2007/03/28

Donna Mendes takes time to discuss what motivated her to become a doctor and gives a detailed account of her experiences in medical school at Columbia University. During the early 1980s, Mendes completed her residency by the age of thirty, and continued her education and training through a fellowship. By 1948 she had opened her own private practice. In 1986, she married Ronald E. Lamont, from Brooklyn, New York. She talks about being the first African American to receive certification in Vascular Surgery and being certified by the American Board of Surgery.

African American medical students.

African American physicians--New York (state)--New York.

Columbia University. School of Medicine

African American couples--New York.

African American women physicians.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Donna M. Mendes, Section A2007_116_001_003, TRT: 0:27:28 2007/03/28

Donna Mendes discusses her medical practice, philosophy and medical specialty. She provides specific information about common ailments in the African American community, as well as the different types of treatments used to cure these ailments. She talks about her membership in the Association of Black Cardiologists. She names some of the doctors who provided her with professional and personal support while she was building her career.

African American women physicians.

African American physicians--New York (state)--New York.

Self-care, Health.

African Americans--Health and hygiene.

Health--Information services.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Donna M. Mendes, Section A2007_116_001_004, TRT: 0:20:04 2007/03/28

Donna Mendes gives details about the Association of Black Cardiologist's outreach program with Maya Angelou, and the role she played in this project. This outreach focused on encouraging African American women to be more active and engaging with one another. Mendes feels that it is important to encourage minority women to take better care of themselves, because good health is key to a healthy heart. She states that she would like to see more minorities in health care services. Mendes discusses the importance of encouraging young people to pursue professional careers, and sees mentorship as way to improve recruitment rates in certain fields.

Angelou, Maya.

Self-care, Health.

Health--Information services.

African Americans--Health and hygiene.

Mentoring in the professions.