

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Hermene Hartman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hartman, Hermene D.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hermene Hartman,
Dates:	April 4, 2001
Bulk Dates:	2001
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes ()
Abstract:	Magazine publishing chief executive Hermene Hartman (1947 -) is the founder of N'DIGO magazine. As a writer, Hartman became well known for her publisher's page, which offers insightful social commentary about important issues in the African American community. The paper also features news profiles, business information and other contemporary topics that reflect the interests of Chicago's black middle class. Hartman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 4, 2001, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2001_035
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Over the course of her eclectic career, Hermene Hartman has distinguished herself as a media pioneer. The founder of Chicago's leading African American magapaper N'DIGO, she is one of the few African American women in publishing. Hartman was born in Chicago on September 24, 1947, the daughter of Herman Hartman, the first black Pepsi-Cola distributor in the United States and Mildred Bowden, a retired administrator of Cook County Hospital.

Hartman's career began during the Civil Rights Movement while working for Operation Breadbasket with the Reverend Jesse Jackson. She coordinated the organization's Black Expo. She later produced public service programming for WBBM-TV Chicago and taught behavioral sciences at the college level from 1973-1984.

Her move into the publishing industry came after her tenure as vice chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago, the nation's second largest community college system. She was the first woman to serve in this capacity, overseeing media and community relations, as well as marketing and publications. During this time, Hartman recognized the need for honest representations rather than stereotypical images of African American culture in mainstream media.

In 1989, she founded N'DIGO magapaper. As a writer, Hartman became well known for her publisher's page, which offers insightful social commentary about important issues in the African American community. The paper also features news profiles, business information and other contemporary topics that reflect the interests of Chicago's black middle class.

Hermene Hartman has successfully operated The Hartman Group, a full-service public relations firm, since 1977. She has received many honors and awards of excellence for her contributions to the business and African American communities. Hartman holds masters degrees in sociology and philosophy of education as well as an MBA from the University of Illinois.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Hermene Hartman was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on April 4, 2001, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Magazine publishing chief executive Hermene Hartman (1947 -) is the founder of N'DIGO magazine. As a writer, Hartman became well known for her publisher's page, which offers insightful social commentary about important issues in the African American community. The paper also features news profiles, business information and other contemporary topics that reflect the interests of Chicago's black middle class.

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:

Hartman, Hermene D.

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hartman, Hermene D.--Interviews

Authors and publishers--Interviews,

African American women executives--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

N'DIGO

Occupations:

Magazine Publishing Chief 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 Hermene Hartman, April 4, 2001. 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 Hermene Hartman, Section A2001_035_001_001, TRT: ?

Hermene D. Hartman begins with a discussion about family members and her family background. She describes her mother's and father's personalities, and sketches their travels from the South to Chicago, where they eventually met. Hartman then describes her childhood, recalling her neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, her favorite activities and recreations, and her experience in grammar school. Hartman says she grew up in a middle-class household, and recalls the first time she became aware of class differences. Part of Hartman's lifestyle was her frequent interactions with celebrities like Bill Cosby, thanks to her uncle, jazz singer Johnny Hartman, whom Hermene D. Hartman describes as being devoted to family despite his fame.

Authors and publishers--Interviews.

African American women executives--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Hermene Hartman, Section A2001_035_001_002, TRT: ?

Hermene D. Hartman has a detailed discussion about her experience at Jones Commercial High School in Chicago, recalling the challenges she faced in adjusting to an all-white environment and dealing with both overt and discreet racism by teachers and students. She describes some of her encounters with racism, but concludes that her high school days had a positive influence on her life, and gave her the skills necessary to succeed. She also details her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement as a teenager, describing how she began to work for Rev. Jesse Jackson at Operation Breadbasket. Hartman then describes her college education, starting at junior college and eventually studying sociology at Roosevelt University. After college, Hartman launched two separate careers--one with the City Colleges of Chicago, and the other as a television producer with Chicago's CBS affiliate. She discusses her time at both of these jobs.

Video Oral History Interview with Hermene Hartman, Section A2001_035_001_003, TRT: ?

Hermene D. Hartman talks about her time working at Operation Breadbasket, explaining her role in planning the first Black Expo, and discussing the overall success of the organization. Hartman then talks about her time working for the City Colleges of Chicago, where she taught classes and created an external affairs department. In this discussion, she explains the importance of the City College system and her efforts to clear up public misconceptions about community colleges in general. Hartman then moves into a discussion about the origins of 'N'DIGO,' the newspaper she founded and for which she is editor-in-chief. Hartman recalls that 'N'DIGO' stemmed from the need to improve media coverage of Black History Month, saying she created 'N'DIGO' when she couldn't find a vehicle for proper coverage. Hartman also explains that 'N'DIGO' filled a need in the black community, and outlines the strategies she implemented in order to make the paper successful.

Video Oral History Interview with Hermene Hartman, Section A2001_035_001_004, TRT: ?

Hermene D. Hartman talks about with the early days of the 'N'DIGO' newspaper, explaining her commitment to building a team mentality amongst the staff, and 'N'DIGO's' association with the 'Chicago Sun-Times.' She also talks about issues surrounding the distribution of the paper, including an unsuccessful change in distribution companies, which prevented 'N'DIGO' from remaining free of charge. Hartman explains why she quickly changed her distribution strategy so that 'N'DIGO' could stay free. Hartman also discusses the paper's partnership with the 'Chicago Tribune,' which she says helped her as a journalist and helped

her publication expand its audience. Hartman then tells the story behind 'N'DIGO's' name, crediting her mother with helping to avert a copyright dispute. Hartman also talks about some of 'N'DIGO's' other projects, including the 'N'DIGO Profiles' business magazine and the 'N'DIGO' Gala fundraisers. Hartman then outlines her publication's future plans to address the needs of the black community.

Video Oral History Interview with Hermene Hartman, Section A2001_035_001_005, TRT: ?

Hermene D. Hartman goes over the many mentors who have influenced her, and whom she credits for having a part in her success. Hartman talks about her parents, her uncle, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rev. Dr. Johnnie Colemon, and Etta Moten Barnett, even devoting time to the racist teachers she had in high school, saying they motivated her to become a success. Hartman then discusses her editorial stances as the editor-in-chief of 'N'DIGO' newspaper. In particular, the discussion focuses on her views regarding former U.S. Congressman Mel Reynolds, a convicted sex offender. Hartman defends her views and believes that by dissenting from popular opinion, she does a service to the black community and to the community as a whole. After discussing her legacy, Hartman describes several photos she brought to the interview that portray her family and career.

Video Oral History Interview with Hermene Hartman, Section A2001_035_001_006, TRT: ?

Hermene D. Hartman describes photos she has brought to the interview, which portray her family and career.

Video Oral History Interview with Hermene Hartman, Section
A2001_035_HERMENE_D_HARTMAN_06_MED_001, TRT: 0:03:00

This tape contains television spots titled "Great Moments in African American History." The spots feature Thomas J. Burrell, Hermene Hartman and Dr. Carla Wilson-Hawkins. They were produced for Comerica Bank by SCTN Teleproductions in 2001.