

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Charlene Drew Jarvis

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Jarvis, Charlene Drew
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Charlene Drew Jarvis,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 13, 2003
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2003
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:22:59).
<b>Abstract:</b>	University president Charlene Drew Jarvis (1941 - ) was the president of Southeastern University and was a member of Washington, D.C. City Council for twenty-one years. Jarvis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 13, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2003_131
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Charlene Drew Jarvis was born in Washington, D.C., on July 31, 1941. The second of four children, her mother was an economist and her father, Dr. Charles Drew, was the noted blood bank pioneer. After graduating from Roosevelt High School in 1958, Jarvis earned her B.A. from Oberlin College in 1962. She went on to Howard University to earn her M.S. in 1964, and in 1971 she earned her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland.

Jarvis began her career in 1965 as a pre-doctoral fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health, and after earning her Ph.D. she remained there as a research scientist until 1978. The following year, Jarvis was elected to the City Council of the District of Columbia, where she served for twenty-one years. While there, she chaired the Committee on Economic Development during a citywide financial crisis. She introduced legislation that brought in the new Convention Center and the MCI Center, current home of the Washington Wizards and Washington Capitals. In 1996, Jarvis was named president of Southeastern University in Washington, D.C., the first woman to hold the position. She gave up her seat on the City Council in 2000 to devote her energies solely to the university. Under her leadership, Southeastern has strengthened its curriculum and partnered with a number of local organizations, such as the Greater Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants, to support professional development of the students.

Active in both education and the community, Jarvis has received numerous honors. She is the recipient of the 2002 Brotherhood-Sisterhood Award from the National Conference of Community and Justice, the Ibero Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award, and numerous honorary degrees. Jarvis serves on the Executive Committee of the Federal City Council and is a past chairperson of the District of Columbia Chamber of Commerce. She is also active with the American Association of University Women and serves on the board of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Jarvis has also been listed in numerous editions of *Who's Who*, including *Who's Who in the World* and *Who's Who Among African Americans*. She has two sons and two grandsons.

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Charlene Drew Jarvis was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 13, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. University president Charlene Drew Jarvis (1941 - ) was the president of Southeastern University and was a member of Washington, D.C. City Council for twenty-one years.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Jarvis, Charlene Drew

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jarvis, Charlene Drew --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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Southeastern University (Washington, D.C.)

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### Occupations:

University President

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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## 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 Charlene Drew Jarvis, June 13, 2003. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Charlene Drew Jarvis, Section A2003\_131\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:05 ?

Charlene Drew Jarvis was born on July 31, 1941 in Washington, D.C. Her mother's family was originally from Nassawadox, Virginia. Her father, Dr. Charles Drew, was born on June 3, 1904 in Washington, D.C. Her paternal

grandmother, Nora Burrell, was from a family in Foggy Bottom in Washington, D.C. and was one of the earliest students to attend Howard University. She became a teacher. Jarvis' family speculates that she was the daughter of a white senator and that is how she was able to attend college. Charles Drew attended Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. and then attended Amherst College with Montague Cobb and Bill Hastie where he was a talented athlete. Charles Drew earned his M.D. degree from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, funded in part by the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Dr. Drew earned his Ph.D from Columbia University in New York City where his research centered on preserving blood plasma which saved many lives. Jarvis dispels the myth surrounding her father's death in a car crash in 1950.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlene Drew Jarvis, Section A2003\_131\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:51 ?

Charlene Drew Jarvis shares memories of her father, Dr. Charles Drew and recalls the care he took when she cut her foot as a child. Jarvis' mother, Lenore Robbins Drew, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her mother had African American, Native American, and white ancestry and grew up in a racially diverse neighborhood. She attended Cheyney State University in Pennsylvania and met Jarvis' father while teaching at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. When her father died, her mother had four young children and had to learn to handle the household independently. She encouraged her children's education and reached out to others, like Eleanor Roosevelt, to support her children's success. Jarvis describes the segregation of Washington, D.C. in the 1940s and 1950s and the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court decision, Brown v. Board of Education in 1954. Jarvis recalls the day her father died in 1950 as well as her childhood memories of directing parking at Griffith Stadium.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlene Drew Jarvis, Section A2003\_131\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:48 ?

Charlene Drew Jarvis attended Lucretia Mott Elementary School in Washington, D.C. where her favorite subject was English and her teachers were nurturing and had high expectations. She then attended Benjamin Banneker Middle School where she met her future husband when she was twelve and he was sixteen, but the age difference caused tension. She experienced the integration of Theodore Roosevelt High School in Washington, D.C. During her first year there, 25% of the students were black and by the end of the third year, it was 75% black. After graduating from high school, Jarvis attended Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio where she majored in psychology. She participated in the choir, attended theater productions, and saw Ray Charles perform. At the end of her sophomore year, she secretly married Ernest Jarvis which upset her mother. After graduating in 1962, they moved to Washington, D.C. where she taught at Howard University. Jarvis earned her Ph.D. in 1971 in neuropsychology from the University of Maryland.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlene Drew Jarvis, Section A2003\_131\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Charlene Drew Jarvis describes her neuropsychology research with non-human primates. She recalls learning of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination while she was teaching at Howard University and being in the midst of the ensuing riots. Seeing how the destroyed neighborhoods had not been rebuilt led Jarvis to become interested in politics. She decided to run for the Washington, D.C. City Council in 1979 with the support of Arrington Dixon and Sharon Pratt. Within a year, she was named to the Committee on Economic Development which became controversial as she was chosen over more senior

members. Here, she focused on healthcare policy and economic recovery. In 1982, Jarvis decided to run for D.C. Mayor against HistoryMaker Marion Barry which created political enemies. After losing the election, Jarvis and Barry engaged in a contentious power struggle but she believes that her efforts laid the foundation for D.C.'s economic rebirth. In 1996, Jarvis became president of Southeastern University.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlene Drew Jarvis, Section A2003\_131\_001\_005, TRT: 0:23:55 ?

Charlene Drew Jarvis describes managing her busy career as President of Southeastern University and a member of the Washington, D.C. City Council. She recalls feeling relieved when she was not re-elected to the City Council after twenty-one years because the demanding schedule was affecting her health. Jarvis describes her concern about the high illiteracy rate in the African American community. Jarvis reflects upon her legacy and concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.