

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Zina Pierre

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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>	Pierre, Zina, 1964-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Zina Pierre,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 14, 2003
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2003
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:08:11).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Government relations chief executive, presidential appointee, and presidential advisor Zina Pierre (1964 - ) was Special Assistant to the President on Intergovernmental Affairs under President Bill Clinton, and founded the Washington Linkage Group, one of the few minority owned political lobbying and consulting firms in Washington D.C. Pierre was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 14, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2003_133
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

As a high-ranking member of President Bill Clinton's administration, Zina C. Pierre worked on issues and programs affecting the lives of women, African Americans and small business owners. Born in 1964 in Annapolis, Maryland, and educated at Catholic University of America, Pierre is the founding president and CEO of the Washington Linkage Group, a political lobbying and consulting firm.

Early in her career, Pierre worked in television journalism as a writer, field reporter and producer. She then moved into the government following Clinton's inauguration in 1993 as a speechwriter. She worked in the Labor Department as communications director for the Women's Bureau. In that capacity, she developed public relations strategies and campaigns for informing women of their rights in the workplace. This included a ten-city tour for the "Don't Work in the Dark" initiative.

Pierre was appointed to director of the Small Business Administration. She was responsible for the department's "Welfare to Work" initiative, for which she developed partnerships with public and private entities to hire approximately 200,000 former welfare recipients. In 2000, Pierre worked as one of the highest-ranking African American women in the White House, serving as special assistant to the president on intergovernmental affairs. In that role, she served as a presidential liaison to city and county governments across the country, promoting the presidential agenda on a local level. Pierre also worked to bridge the "digital divide" by making technology accessible to people from low-income backgrounds.

After leaving the White House, Pierre started the Washington Linkage Group. She also served as director of the National Council of Black Mayors Corporate Advisory Council, and as vice chairperson of the Future PAC, a national African American women's political action committee. Pierre is frequently sought out for her views on women's issues and politics, and is the recipient of many awards and commendations. She is an associate pastor at her childhood church in Annapolis and is working on a master's degree in divinity.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Zina Pierre was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 14, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Government relations chief executive, presidential appointee, and presidential advisor Zina Pierre (1964 - ) was Special Assistant to the President on Intergovernmental Affairs under President Bill Clinton, and founded the Washington Linkage Group, one of the few minority owned political lobbying and consulting firms in Washington D.C.

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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:

Pierre, Zina, 1964-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Pierre, Zina, 1964---Interviews

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African American political consultants--Interviews

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Lobbyists--Interviews

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African American executives--Interviews

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Government employees--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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## **Occupations:**

Presidential Appointee

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Presidential Advisor

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Government Relations Chief Executive

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

PoliticalMakers

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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 Zina Pierre, June 14, 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 2/5/2020 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 Zina Pierre, Section  
A2003\_133\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:27 2003/06/14

Zina Pierre was born on December 29, 1964 in Annapolis, Maryland. Her mother, Florence Louise Weens Justine was born in 1941 in Annapolis, Maryland and worked as a nurse at a mental hospital. Her maternal grandfather owned a cab stand in Annapolis. Her father, Darryl Celestine Pierre was born in 1941 in Louisiana. Her paternal grandfather owned a grocery store in New Orleans, Louisiana. Pierre's family attended First Baptist Church of Annapolis since its inception over 100 years ago. Pierre's parents split when Pierre was a baby, and her mother married when she was seven. Due to her mother's work schedule and a troubled relationship with her stepfather, Pierre grew close to her grandmother, aunt, and

cousins. Pierre attended Annapolis High School and was a good student until 10th grade when her grades suffered due to family problems. Pierre played the flute and recorder, started a secret sorority, and was named to the Homecoming Court.

African American political consultants--Interviews.

Lobbyists--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

Government employees--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Zina Pierre, Section  
A2003\_133\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:27 2003/06/14

Zina Pierre talks about her education and early career. She moved away from home at age fifteen and lived with a cousin due to disagreements with her stepfather. Because of her low grade point average, Pierre attended Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland while working full-time. She then attended The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. where she graduated with a B.A. degree in communications in 1987. She was hired as a receptionist at Gannett Company and then became a production assistant for the short-lived USA Today television show. She worked four jobs before taking a six month break. While working at News Channel 8 in Washington, D.C. she attended one of Bill Clinton's inaugural balls. She then gave her resume to someone she met and was hired as a communications aide. Pierre created a quarterly talk show for the federal government and wrote speeches. She quickly rose through the ranks to become the Director of the Welfare to Work Initiative at the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Video Oral History Interview with Zina Pierre, Section  
A2003\_133\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:59 2003/06/14

Zina Pierre describes the Welfare to Work Initiative that she championed as Director of the Welfare to Work Initiative at the U.S. Small Business Administration. She comments on the difficulties facing people on welfare and the negative stereotypes that prevent impoverished people from being hired. She also comments on the challenges of ministering to the poor. Pierre was called to become a Baptist minister and pursued her M.A. degree in religion

from Howard University School of Divinity. Pierre became the Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs. On the third day of this job, she attended an event and rode in the motorcade with President Bill Clinton who reminisced about Civil Rights and black history. Pierre supported Clinton through the impeachment and believes that he made many great contributions as president. Pierre names her mentors and the people she admired in the Clinton administration including HistoryMakers Dorothy Height, Alexis Herman, and Minyon Moore.

Video Oral History Interview with Zina Pierre, Section  
A2003\_133\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:34 2003/06/14

Zina Pierre remembers the final days of the Clinton administration. Pierre was saddened by the prospect that the good work and programs that had been implemented would be discontinued. President Bill Clinton gave her many parting gifts to thank her for her service including a video of a man touring the Bible through Israel and an ivory plant. Pierre remembers riding in the motorcade following a speech and talking to President Clinton about legacy and religion. Pierre became CEO of the Washington Linkage Group. Pierre comments on her hope that a black civil rights leader will emerge. Pierre reflects upon her legacy and narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Zina Pierre, Section  
A2003\_133\_001\_005, TRT: 0:08:44 2003/06/14

Zina Pierre narrates her photographs.