

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Iva Carruthers

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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>	Carruthers, Iva E., 1945-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Iva Carruthers,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 12, 2003
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2003
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:50:58).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Sociologist Iva Carruthers (1945 - ) is the founder of the information and educational technology firm, Nexus Unlimited, and served as president of the Urban Outreach Foundation. Carruthers was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 12, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2003_308
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Noted educator and social advocate Iva A. Carruthers was born on April 5, 1945, in Chicago, Illinois. Carruthers attended the University of Illinois at Chicago, graduating in 1967 with B.A. degrees in sociology and French. After completing her undergraduate studies, Carruthers enrolled at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, receiving both an M.A. in counselor education and a Ph.D. in sociology in 1972.

After finishing graduate school, Carruthers became a professor of sociology at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. In 1979, while still teaching,

Carruthers founded Nexus Unlimited, an information and educational technology firm, and served as the company's president.

Carruthers has also become well known for using her ministry as a vehicle for addressing social issues, particularly those involving people of African descent both here and abroad. She authored *The Church and Reparations - An African American Perspective*, which was distributed at the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, where she also served as a delegate. In December of that year, Carruthers became president of the Urban Outreach Foundation, a nonprofit, interdenominational organization that assists African and African American communities with education, healthcare and community development.

Carruthers is a recipient of numerous awards, honors, and postdoctoral fellowships, such as the 1999 Life Achievement Award from Northeastern Illinois University; the 2000 Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award, from the National Foundation of Women Legislators and the Small Business Administration; and *Ebony's* Outstanding Mother Award for Mentoring in 2001. She is a frequent guest speaker at the national and international level, an author and editor of numerous publications, and serves as a trustee for several organizations, including the Chicago Theological Seminary and the John Henrik Clarke Institute for African Research. In 2001, she received a master's degree in theological studies from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois.

A widow of the late Ralph Wells, Carruthers is the mother of two sons.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Iva Carruthers was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 12, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Sociologist Iva Carruthers (1945 - ) is the founder of the information and educational technology firm, Nexus Unlimited, and served as president of the Urban Outreach Foundation.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The

## **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:**

Carruthers, Iva E., 1945-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Carruthers, Iva E., 1945- --Interviews

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## **Organizations:**

## **Occupations:**

Sociologist

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

CivicMakers

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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 Iva Carruthers, March 12, 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 Iva Carruthers, Section  
A2003\_308\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:50 2003/03/16

Iva Carruthers narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Iva Carruthers, Section  
A2003\_308\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:32 2003/03/16

Iva Carruthers was born on April 5, 1945 in Chicago, Illinois. When her mother, Lois Banks Johnson, was five years old, she moved with her parents from Little Rock, Arkansas to live with her grandparents in Evanston, Illinois. Most of the Banks family settled in Evanston, with the exception of Carruthers' great-uncle who moved to Brazil in the early 1900s to escape the racism of the U.S. Carruthers' father, William H. Johnson, left Pennsylvania for the Chanute Air Force Base in Champaign County, Illinois where he met her mother. Johnson was a Tuskegee Airman and was fighting in World War II when she was born. She idolized her parents and grew up in a loving home, which she shared with her immediate and extended family, in addition to roomers. Evanston's segregated African American community was tight knit, centered around church and provided Carruthers with African American role models. Carruthers explains the history of Evanston's African American community and narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Iva Carruthers, Section  
A2003\_308\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:54 2003/03/16

Iva Carruthers established her strong spiritual foundation at Ebenezer A.M.E. Church in Evanston, Illinois and met Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when he visited. As a child, she loved to read and attended segregated Foster Elementary School. In sixth grade, she was expelled, after

hitting a white substitute teacher who had slapped her, and sent to a white school. She attended Haven Middle School and Evanston Township High School where she aspired to be a sociologist and led a walkout following the Birmingham, Alabama church bombing in 1963. Carruthers attended the University of Illinois at Chicago, and married Ralph Wells her sophomore year. In 1968, her husband drowned, leaving her with their eleven-month-old son. Carruthers created a scholarship fund in his name at Northwestern University in Evanston. She completed her graduate work at the university and earned her M.A. degree and Ph.D. degree in 1972. She accepted a position as a sociology professor at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Iva Carruthers, Section  
A2003\_308\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:23 2003/03/16

Iva Carruthers describes the birth of the Center for Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois, and her role in choosing its first faculty and student body. She met her second husband, African historian HistoryMaker Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr., at the Communiversity, a forum where members of the African American community surrounding the campus and scholars came together to exchange ideas. During the 1970s, Chicago was a center of African American thought, activism and art; and, the Carruthers' home become the nucleus of the Pan-African Movement in the city. John Henrik Clarke became a father-figure to Carruthers. She also developed a relationship with his mentor historian John G. Jackson, whom she brought to Africa, helped get appointed to a visiting professorship at Northeastern and allowed to live in her home. Carruthers met Cheikh Anta Diop in Senegal. She explains how her identity as an African aligns with her identity as and a Christian.

Video Oral History Interview with Iva Carruthers, Section  
A2003\_308\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:15 2003/03/16

Iva Carruthers recalls meeting Carlos and Shawna Moore in Senegal during the 1970s. She also describes how Cheikh Anta Diop and Theophile Obenga presented evidence to support the Black Egyptian hypothesis during

the 1974 UNESCO Symposium on the Peopling of Ancient Egypt and the Deciphering of the Meroitic Script. In 1979, Carruthers took a sabbatical from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, Illinois and developed software to teach African and African American history, which eventually led to her becoming the first African American woman to own an IBM dealership. She went on to serve on a White House advisory panel on the use of what would become the Internet for educational purposes. Carruthers' father underwent a kidney replacement which sparked her interest in studying eugenics as it relates to racism and the ability to control how people look with new medical technology. She talks about the life of Dr. John Henrik Clarke, who was a father-figure to her and enriched her life.

Video Oral History Interview with Iva Carruthers, Section  
A2003\_308\_001\_006, TRT: 0:20:04 2003/03/16

Iva Carruthers began an information and educational technology firm called Nexus Unlimited for which she won the Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2000 and was awarded the ComputerWorld Smithsonian award. Carruthers felt a calling from God to go into social justice ministry and attended Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois where she earned her M.A. degree in theological studies. She began research on reparations which grew into a piece entitled, 'The Church and Reparations: An African American Perspective,' which was translated into four languages and presented at the 2001 United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Carruthers created the Orita Foundation, a retreat center housed at Lois House in Chicago, Illinois and became president of Urban Outreach Foundation. She talks about Pan-African theopraxis, describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflects upon her legacy.