

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Marie Johns

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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>	Johns, Marie Annette Collins, 1951-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marie Johns,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 3, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:05:31).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Corporate executive The Honorable Marie Johns (1951 - ) was a former deputy administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and served as the president of Verizon, Washington, DC. Johns was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 3, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_012
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

State representative, telecommunications chief executive and the deputy administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Hon. Marie Annette Collins Johns was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on August 19, 1951. Johns grew up with her parents, Freida Delight Casey Collins and Richard D. Collins, a retired police lieutenant, in an urban Indianapolis African American community. She attended Grandview Elementary School. Upon entry into North Central High School, and in order to be afforded more competitive and challenging educational opportunities, the family relocated to the suburbs. Johns excelled in high school, and went on to attend Indiana University. She earned a B.S. degree in urban studies and public policy analysis in 1979 and an M.S. degree in management, public policy analysis & budgeting at Indiana University. She also attended post-graduate courses at Harvard University and the University of Virginia, studying federal regulatory policy and financial management respectively.

Johns began her career as a fiscal analyst in the Indiana Legislative Services Agency. From there, she was hired as the staff supervisor for Bell Atlantic Network Services in Arlington, Virginia. She then became FCC Director at Bell Atlantic Corporation articulating and defending Bell Atlantic's interests with telecommunications industry organizations. She continued working in assignments showing increased skills and responsibility with C & P Telephone Co. and Bell Atlantic. In April of 1998, she was named president and CEO of Bell Atlantic and then served as president of Verizon, Washington, D.C. until February 2004.

Johns has participated in a wide range of organizations that support education and youth. During her tenure as president, she was instrumental in the effort to obtain a \$10 million grant for the D.C. Public Schools. She assisted with the development of DC Reads, a literacy coalition that provides support to programs that offer leadership, training and development. In addition, she spearheaded a Verizon-sponsored program called SEEDS, that trained out-of-school youth for jobs in the information technology industry. Johns was the Director for a non-profit that provided funding for every public school and library in Washington, D.C. for high-speed connections and local

area networks. Johns provided leadership in the formation of the Washington D.C. Technology Council and the Georgia Avenue Business Resource Center. She was a mayoral appointee to the National Capital Revitalization Corporation. Johns is seated on many boards, including a trustee of Howard University. Johns has been the recipient of over 100 awards for her business and civic leadership. She was named by the *Washingtonian Magazine* as one of the 100 Most Powerful Women in 1999 and 2001, and as one of the Twenty-five Most Influential Black Women in Business by the *Network Journal* in April, 2003. She and her husband, Wendell, have a son, Richard.

Hon. Marie Annette Collins Johns was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 3, 2004.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Marie Johns was conducted by Sandra Ford Johnson on March 3, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate executive The Honorable Marie Johns (1951 - ) was a former deputy administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and served as the president of Verizon, Washington, DC.

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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:

Johns, Marie Annette Collins, 1951-

Johnson, Sandra Ford (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Johns, Marie Annette Collins, 1951---Interviews

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African American businesspeople--Indiana--Indianapolis--Interviews.

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African American executives--Indiana--Indianapolis--Interviews.

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African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

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African American businesspeople--Washington (D.C.)--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:**

Corporate Executive

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

BusinessMakers

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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 The Honorable Marie Johns, March 3, 2004. 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 The Honorable Marie Johns, Section A2004\_012\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:56 ?

The Honorable Marie Johns was born on August 19, 1951 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Johns' mother, Freida Casey Collins, grew up on a farm on the outskirts of Marion, Indiana. She attended secretarial school and then moved to Indianapolis where she met Johns' father, Richard Collins. Johns' paternal family migrated from Tennessee to Indianapolis, where her grandfather owned a landscaping business and her father worked for the Indianapolis Police Department. Johns' parents took her and her two sisters on trips to Cincinnati, Ohio and Chicago, Illinois to visit museums; and did not allow their daughters to patronize the segregated Riverside Amusement Park in Indianapolis. Johns' parents moved the family from the center city Barrington Heights neighborhood to a more suburban neighborhood of Indianapolis for better educational opportunities. There, Johns attended Grandview Elementary School and was exposed to the economic stratification within the African American community for the first time.

African American parents--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American neighborhoods--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American families--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American children--Indiana--Indianapolis.

Segregation in education--Indiana.

Classism.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marie Johns, Section A2004\_012\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:36 ?

The Honorable Marie Johns attended Methodist church services intermittently as a child. She recalls riding her bike around Indianapolis, Indiana and listening to Motown music. In junior high school, Johns did well in her science class and was chosen to go on two overnight field trips to an Indiana state park. She attended North Central High School in Indianapolis, which had a majority white student population. She took honors courses, but felt excluded from extracurricular activities. After graduating from high school, Johns entered Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Her sophomore year, she got married and gave birth to her son. Johns earned both her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Indiana University. She briefly worked for a community development organization, and then worked for the Legislative Services Agency as a non-partisan staffer for the Indiana General Assembly. Johns was then hired by Indiana Bell as a financial analyst. In 1984, she and her husband relocated to Bethesda, Maryland.

African Americans--Social life and customs--Indiana--Indianapolis.

African American fathers.

African American neighborhoods--Indiana--Indianapolis.  
African American students.  
African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Indiana--Indianapolis.  
African American college students--Social conditions.  
Classism.  
African American children--Indiana--Indianapolis.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marie Johns, Section A2004\_012\_001\_003,  
TRT: 0:30:26 ?

The Honorable Marie Johns got married her sophomore year at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. After graduating from Indiana University with B.A. and M.A. degrees in public administration, she worked for Congresswoman Julia Carson at the Legislative Services Agency of the Indiana General Assembly. Johns then joined Indiana Bell as a financial analyst. She later transitioned into a consulting position within the department of regulatory affairs. Johns began working for Bell Atlantic after moving to Bethesda, Maryland. She recalls being passed over for a promotion despite scoring better on the company's assessment experience. Johns describes how this experience with workplace discrimination influenced her strategy for professional advancement. In 1987, she took a leave of absence from Bell Atlantic to work for the General Services Administration for a year. At GSA, she completed property studies and traveled to Eastern Europe. Johns shares her views on mentorship and the concept of the glass ceiling.

Indiana University.  
Interpersonal relations.  
African American businesspeople.  
Bell Atlantic Corporation.  
Discrimination in employment--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marie Johns, Section A2004\_012\_001\_004,  
TRT: 0:25:26 ?

The Honorable Marie Johns pioneered education and economic development initiatives during her tenure as president/CEO of Verizon, Washington, D.C. Through partnerships with community organizations, these programs addressed the problem of adult illiteracy and expanded public access to the Internet in the D.C. metropolitan area. Johns also founded the Washington D.C. Technology Council. She plans to continue volunteering for public service programs during her retirement. Johns considers how the Civil Rights Movement created professional opportunities for African Americans in business, explains the importance of history for the African American community and shares advice for future businesswomen. Johns' familial and professional role models, include her grandmothers, husband, and colleagues in the telecommunications industry. Johns concludes by describing how she would like to be remembered and reflecting upon her legacy.

African American grandparents.  
Verizon.  
African American business enterprises.  
African American businesspeople--Washington (D.C.).  
African American women civic leaders.  
School improvement programs--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marie Johns, Section A2004\_012\_001\_005,

TRT: 0:10:07 ?

The Honorable Marie Johns narrates her photographs.