Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Hon. Marie Johns

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers®
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Creator: Johns, Hon. Marie

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Marie Johns

Dates: March 3, 2004

Bulk Dates: 2004

Physical Description: 5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:05:02).

Abstract: State representative and telecommunications chief executive Hon. Marie Johns (1951 - ) is the 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.

Identification: A2004_012

Language: The interview and records are in English.

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.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Hon. Marie Johns was conducted by Sandra Ford Johnson on March 3, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. State representative and telecommunications chief executive Hon. Marie Johns (1951 - ) is the deputy administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and served as the president of Verizon, Washington, DC.

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:

Hon. Marie Johns

Johnson, Sandra Ford (Interviewer)
Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Hon. Marie Johns--Interviews

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

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

African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

African American businesspeople--Washington (D.C.)--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Georgia. General Assembly. House of Representatives.

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

BusinessMakers

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


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/26/2011 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, March 3, 2004

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Marie Johns, Section A2004_012_001_001, TRT: 0:29:56 2004/03/03

Hon. Marie Annette Collins Johns was born on August 19, 1951 in Indianapolis, Indiana to Freida Delight Casey Collins and Richard Delon Collins. She describes how her parents met in Indianapolis. Growing up in segregated Indianapolis in the 1950s, Johns remembers the neighborhood amusement park, Riverside Amusement Park, was inaccessible for African Americans. African Americans could only enter the amusement park one day of the year. She then describes her educational experiences at Grandview Elementary School in Indianapolis, Indiana. John says that the Brown v. the Board of Education decision had no impact on Indianapolis public schools and the schools remained segregated despite the court rulings. John then talks about her neighborhood growing up on Harding Street in Indianapolis and describes the neighborhood as a typical suburban area populated with bungalow style homes. She ends the segment of the interview by discussing how classism existed within her community.

African American life--Indiana--Indianapolis.
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 Hon. Marie Johns, Section A2004_012_001_002, TRT: 0:29:36 2004/03/03

Hon Marie Annette Collins Johns discusses her family background and her educational experiences. She remembers the sight of her father in his police uniform and the rural characteristics of her town while riding her bike throughout the neighborhood. Johns describes her grade school teachers at Grandview Elementary School in Indianapolis, Indiana and the impact they had on her life. Johns attended North Central High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. She recalls having a rigorous course load, being a good student and the classism among the few African Americans at her high school. Johns attended Indiana University and within a week of arriving there, she met her future husband, Wendell Johns. She had their first son during her sophomore year. Johns describes the political movements and segregation within Indiana
University's student organizations. She explains the racial tensions in college and ends the interview segment discussing how she and her family moved to Maryland in 1984.

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 Hon. Marie Johns, Section A2004_012_001_003, TRT: 0:30:26 2004/03/03

Hon Marie Annette Collins Johns describes her relationship with her husband, including how she met him and why she decided to get married in college. She says she never thought marriage would restrict her from accomplishing any of her dreams. Her goal was to run a major department of government. Johns remembers being a news junkie and working for U.S. Congresswoman Julie Carson while in college. Johns graduated from Indiana University with a bachelors and masters in public administration and started working at Indiana Bell in Indianapolis, Indiana. Johns then talks about her career at Bell Atlantic and the discrimination she endured in the workplace. She ends the segment of the interview by discussing her acceptance to a federal government program which allowed her to travel to Moscow, Poland and Finland for business.

Indiana University.
African American interpersonal relationships.
African American businesspeople.
Bell Atlantic Corporation.
Discrimination in employment--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Hon. Marie Johns, Section A2004_012_001_004, TRT: 0:25:26 2004/03/03

Hon Marie Annette Collins Johns talks about the impact her grandmothers, Marjorie Collins and Zanobia Ward Casey, had on her upbringing. She admires all the women in her life who gave her the strength to persevere. Johns says she had a duty to give back to the community with her position as president of Verizon Washington in Washington, D.C. She describes the initiatives she created while working at Verizon, which included providing technology learning centers throughout Washington, D.C.; wiring every public school and library with internet access; installing parks and recreation centers in every neighborhood in Washington, D.C.; providing computer and telecommunications training to high school dropouts; and helping the students complete high school or obtain their GED. Johns ends the interview by discussing how she wants to be remembered for doing the best she could with what she had and helping someone else along the way.

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 Hon. Marie Johns, Section A2004_012_001_005, TRT: 0:09:38 2004/03/03

Hon. Marie Annette Collins Johns narrates the photographs she brought to the interview.