

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Renee Powell

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Powell, Renee, 1946-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Renee Powell,
Dates:	March 16, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:26:01).
Abstract:	Golfer Renee Powell (1946 -) was one of only three African American women to ever play on the Ladies Professional Golf Association's Tour. In 2003, she received the First Lady of Golf Award from the Professional Golfers' Association. Powell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 16, 2004, in East Canton, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_024
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Professional golfer and educator Renee Powell is one of only three African American women to ever play on the Ladies Professional Golf Association's (LPGA) Tour. She is the daughter of William Powell, owner of the Clearview Golf Course in Canton, Ohio, the first such facility designed, constructed, owned and operated by an African American. Renee Powell graduated from high school in Canton in 1964 and attended Ohio University and Ohio State University.

She began competing as a golfer at age twelve, and continued perfecting her game during her college years. She made her professional debut on the LPGA Tour in 1967, and her first tournament was the U.S. Women's Open conducted by the United States Golf Association. In 1980, when she finished competing on the Tour, she taught golf in Africa and Europe and later returned home to Canton where she currently serves as the head professional golfer at Clearview Golf Course. In 2000, Clearview Golf Course was named to the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The Powell family established the Clearview Legacy Foundation for education, preservation and turf grass research. In 2003, Renee Powell received the First Lady of Golf Award from the Professional Golfers' Association. In 2007, she received the first Rolex "For the Love of the Game" Award.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Renee Powell was conducted by Regennia Williams on March 16, 2004, in East Canton, Ohio, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Golfer Renee Powell (1946 -) was one of only three African American women to ever play on the Ladies Professional Golf Association's Tour. In 2003, she received the First Lady of Golf Award from the Professional Golfers' Association.

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:

Powell, Renee, 1946-

Williams, Regennia (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Powell, Renee, 1946---Interviews

African American women golfers--Interviews

Golf teachers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Professional Golfers' Association of America.

Occupations:

Golfer

HistoryMakers® Category:

SportsMakers

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 Renee Powell, March 16, 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).

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

Video Oral History Interview with Renee Powell, Section A2004_024_001_001, TRT: 0:30:28 ?

Renee Powell was born on May 4, 1946 in Canton, Ohio. Her mother, Marcella Powell, was born in Alliance, Ohio and grew up in Canton. Her father, William Powell, was born in Alabama and moved to Minerva, Ohio at age three. He attended Wilberforce University, where he played on its first golf team, served in the military during World War II, and built Clearview Golf Club, the first integrated golf course in the United States. Powell attended public schools until third grade, when she transferred to St. Benedict's School, a Catholic school,

due to experiencing racism. She was the only black student at St. Benedict's until her brother Larry reached school age, and faced racial discrimination from a school bus driver who ordered her to sit in the back. Powell grew up in an isolated house on the golf course, so did not have many childhood friends. She remembers that local whites frequented the golf club less after the Civil Rights Movement began. Powell graduated from Central Catholic High School in Canton in 1964.

African American women golfers--Interviews.

Golf teachers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Renee Powell, Section A2004_024_001_002, TRT: 0:29:32 ?

Renee Powell grew up maintaining her father's golf course, Clearview Golf Club in East Canton, Ohio, which he later expanded from nine to eighteen holes. She was a senior at Central Catholic High School when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated and graduated from high school in 1964, the year the Civil Rights Act was passed. Powell attended Ohio University in Athens, where she was captain of the golf team; she transferred to Ohio State University in Columbus after her coach did not allow her to travel to the NCAA Tournament in Florida. In 1967, Powell joined the LPGA Tour, qualifying for her player's card on her first attempt. She was the second black woman to play on the tour, was sponsored by her parents; and, received threatening letters and was refused service in restaurants due to her race while on tour. Powell is inspired by reading biographies of successful African Americans like Jesse Owens and Harriet Tubman. She talks about the United Golf Association and the African American golf community.

Video Oral History Interview with Renee Powell, Section A2004_024_001_003, TRT: 0:29:23 ?

Renee Powell describes the history of African Americans' involvement in golf, from their role as caddies in the early 20th century to the first black professional golfers in the 1960s. Powell notes that African Americans on the PGA Tour have decreased in recent decades and that as late as 1990, the NAACP and national golf associations had to pressure private golf clubs to admit minorities and women as members. Powell visited Augusta National Golf Club in 1997, when Tiger Woods won his first Masters Tournament. She comments on the significance of his Masters' win; older black golfers', like Lee Elder's pride, in Woods; and the controversy over Woods' racial heritage. Powell talks about Strom Thurmond's African American daughter; the firestorm around a racist joke told by golfer Fuzzy Zoeller; the decline of the United Golf Association; phenomenon of Europeans playing on golf teams at historically black colleges (HBCUs); and the role of HBCUs in an integrated society.

Video Oral History Interview with Renee Powell, Section A2004_024_001_004, TRT: 0:31:17 ?

Renee Powell traveled to England for professional tournaments and lived in the country during the 1970s. Like her father, who served in England during World War II, she found the country more hospitable to minorities than the United States. In the 1980s, Powell began an initiative to teach golf to indigenous peoples in Africa. One of her first programs was in Zambia, where she was originally barred for diplomatic reasons, but eventually built a program by forging a friendship with Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda, an avid golfer. During the warmer months in America, Powell helped manage Clearview Golf Club in East Canton, Ohio, her family's course. Clearview struggled to attract white golfers in the 1980s, when the sport's popularity was relatively low among blacks. In 2001, Clearview was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Powell comments on the small amount of African American PGA golf professionals as of 2004, lists important golf publications, and offers advice to

aspiring golfers.

Video Oral History Interview with Renee Powell, Section A2004_024_001_005, TRT: 0:25:21 ?

Renee Powell won the Budget Service Award in 1999 for her efforts in junior golf, the Card Walker Award in 2000 from the PGA Tour, and was named First Lady of Golf by the PGA in 2003. She has been named one of the top golf teachers in America by Golf for Women and Golf Digest. In 1992, the entire Powell family was honored with the National Golf Foundation Jack Nicklaus Family of the Year Award for their services to the game of golf. Powell reflects upon the legacy of her family and narrates her photographs.