

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wallace, Joan Scott, 1930-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace,
Dates:	August 31, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:20:00).
Abstract:	Academic administrator and cabinet appointee The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace (1930 - 2018) was the first female vice president of the National Urban League, and has served as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, head of the International Cooperation and Development Agency, Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, and CEO of Americans for Democracy in Africa. Wallace was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 31, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_155
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Academic administrator and cabinet appointee The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace was born in Chicago, Illinois on November 8, 1930. Her mother, Esther, worked as a social worker, and her father, William Edouard, was a painter during the Harlem Renaissance. Many of his works appeared as covers on the NAACP's magazine, *The Crisis*. After graduating from Englewood High School in Chicago in 1948, Wallace attended Bradley University, earning a B.A. in social work. Wallace then went on to attend Columbia University, earning a master's in social work in 1958, and later earned a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1973.

Beginning her career with the government during the Carter administration, Wallace was named Assistant Secretary of Agriculture in 1977. There she managed administration policy in personnel, equal opportunity and administrative law among other duties. She held that post until 1981, when she became the head of the International Cooperation and Development Agency. In that position, Wallace sent specialists to 100 foreign countries to provide technical assistance in agriculture and managed over 500 research programs. With the election of George H. W. Bush as president, Wallace was a diplomat with the rank of ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago and represented the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

Wallace retired from the government shortly after the election of President Clinton, and then became the CEO of Americans for Democracy in Africa, a non-profit organization that monitored elections in African countries. Wallace has also served as dean of the Howard University School of Social Work, the director of the Western Michigan School of Social Work and the vice president for administration at Morgan State University. She also was the first female vice president of the National Urban League under Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

Wallace passed away on March 15, 2018.

Since 2000, Wallace has been the commissioner of Volunteer Florida: the Governor's Commission on Community Service.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 31, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator and cabinet appointee The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace (1930 - 2018) was the first female vice president of the National Urban League, and has served as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, head of the International Cooperation and Development Agency, Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, and CEO of Americans for Democracy in Africa.

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:

Wallace, Joan Scott, 1930-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wallace, Joan Scott, 1930---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Dept. of Agriculture.

Occupations:

Federal Government Appointee

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Joan Scott Wallace, August 31, 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 The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace, Section
A2004_155_001_001, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace was born on November 8, 1930 in Chicago, Illinois. Her mother, Esther Fulks Scott, was born in Charleston, West Virginia and attended West Virginia Collegiate Institute in Institute, West Virginia for two years. She later became a probation officer. Wallace's father, the famous Chicago Black Renaissance painter, William Edouard Scott, was from Indianapolis, Indiana. He studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Illinois. Wallace's parents met through friends; her mother's gregarious character complimented her father's quiet nature. They lived in the Rosenwald Apartments in Chicago, where Wallace attended nursery school. Wallace was a shy child who was a high academic achiever. She attended Oakland School, later moving to Austin O. Sexton Elementary School at ten years old. She remembers her father painting her with her doll and teddy bear and the smell of his cooking. She also recalls going to the Abraham Lincoln Center where she once wrote and put on a play.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace, Section
A2004_155_001_002, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace transferred to Austin O. Sexton Elementary School in Chicago, Illinois when she was ten years old. The Oakland neighborhood was predominantly white when Scott arrived, but three years later became predominantly African American. Wallace enjoyed attending Sexton; during this time, she was captain of the hall monitors, a Girl Scout and a member of St. Edmund's Episcopal Church. She graduated as salutatorian from Englewood High School and initially aspired to be a doctor. Wallace received a scholarship to Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois where she integrated her dorm and was in a play with HistoryMaker Reverend C.T. Vivian. She describes herself as someone who played by the rules in college. She traveled to Puerto Rico on a summer work program through an Episcopal church in Peoria. After graduating in 1952, Wallace entered Columbia University School of Social Work in New York, New York and eloped in 1953. Wallace also talks about her father's work and his religion.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace, Section
A2004_155_001_003, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace graduated from Columbia University School of Social Work in New York City in 1954 and had a traditional wedding ceremony after having eloped in 1953. She became a social worker, later teaching social work at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Wallace attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois for her Ph.D. while working as director of African American studies at Barat College in Lake Forest, Illinois, which led to her dissertation research on the impact of African American studies. Graduating in 1973, she became dean of the School of Social Work at Howard University in Washington, D.C., later leaving to become the first female vice president of the National Urban League, working under HistoryMaker Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. After her divorce, Wallace became vice president at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, where she met her second husband. She was then recruited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to become assistant secretary for administration.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace, Section
A2004_155_001_004, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace was sworn in as assistant secretary for administration for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1977. Despite a hostile

work environment, she fought for African Americans, mainly through implementing better funding for HBCUs, among other efforts. Meanwhile, her husband was a lobbyist for Opportunities Industrialization Center. Wallace later joined the Office of International Cooperation and Development where she led U.S. delegations in meetings with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme. Through the Department of Agriculture, she also worked for the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture in Trinidad. After returning from Trinidad and retiring, Wallace founded Americans for Democracy in Africa and traveled to African countries to observe elections. She recalls her travels to Nigeria, its controversial 1993 election and Abacha Administration. Wallace also describes her activities since retirement.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace, Section A2004_155_001_005, TRT: 0:20:40 ?

The Honorable Joan Scott Wallace traveled with Stanley Hugh Smith, former president of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, to Sudan on behalf of Americans for Democracy in Africa. Her conversations with locals in Sudan about conditions of war and slavery left her with more confusion than clarity. Wallace describes her hopes for the African American community and how she would like to be remembered. She reflects upon her life and legacy. She concludes by narrating her photographs.