

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Carmel Marr

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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>	Marr, Carmel, 1921-2015
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Carmel Marr,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 13, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:24:00).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Lawyer and legal advisor Carmel Marr (1921 - 2015 ) was appointed to the United States Mission to The United Nations as a legal advisor, and as senior legal officer to the United Nations Secretariat. Marr was the first black woman appointed to the New York State Public Service Commission, and was a past president and chair of the Amistad Research Center, co-founded by her husband Warren. Marr passed away on April 20, 2015. Marr was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 13, 2004, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_158
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Attorney, retired energy consultant and former member to the United States Mission to the United Nations, Carmel Carrington Marr was born June 23, 1921 in Brooklyn, New York. Her parents, William P. and Gertrude Carrington, immigrated to the United States from the island of Barbados. She attended PS 35 in Brooklyn and went on to Hunter College, graduating with a B.A. (Cum Laude)

in political science in 1945. Marr earned a J.D. from Columbia University Law School in 1948.

After a period in private practice she was appointed to the United States Mission to The United Nations as a legal advisor in 1953. Marr joined Dr. Ralph Bunche, Marion Anderson, Robert L. Brokenburr, Dr. Channing Tobias, Frank Montero, Edith Sampson, Charles Mahoney, and James Nabrit as African Americans associated with the United Nations in its formative years. Marr served as senior legal officer to the United Nations Secretariat from 1967 to 1968, during which time she wrote a book on United Nations procedures. Appointed to the New York State Human Rights Appeal Board in 1968, Marr was the first black woman appointed to the New York State Public Service Commission as a regulator of utilities. She served as chair of the advisory council to the Gas Research Institute from 1979 to 1986, chairperson of the United States Department of Transportation's Tech Pipeline Safety Standards Commission, 1979-85, and chairperson of the National Association of Regulatory Utilities Commissioners, NARUC, and Gas Committee, 1984-86. Marr was also president of the NARUC's Great Lakes Conference of Public Utilities Commissioners. She was an energy consultant until her retirement in 1990.

Marr, honored on numerous occasions, volunteered for many organizations including: Friends of the Billie Holiday Theatre, the National Arts Stabilization Fund, the Brooklyn Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Alpha Phi Alpha. With her husband, Warren, she was intensely involved in the Amistad Research Center, which he co-founded in 1976. Marr was president and chair of Amistad from 1982 to 1995. The Marrs, lived in Valley Cottage, New York, and had two adult children, Warren Quincy Marr III and Charles Carrington Marr.

Marr passed away on April 20, 2015.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Carmel Marr was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 13, 2004, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Lawyer and legal advisor Carmel Marr (1921 - 2015) was appointed to the United States Mission to The United Nations as a legal advisor, and as senior legal officer to the United Nations Secretariat. Marr was the first black woman appointed to the New York State Public Service Commission, and was a past president and chair of the Amistad Research Center, co-founded by her husband Warren. Marr passed away on April 20, 2015.

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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:

Marr, Carmel, 1921-2015

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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United Nations.

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## **Occupations:**

Lawyer

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Legal Advisor

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

LawMakers

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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 Carmel Marr, September 13, 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 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 Carmel Marr, Section  
A2004\_158\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:52 2004/09/13

Carmel Marr was born June 23, 1921 in Brooklyn, New York, New York. Her mother, Gertrude Lewis Carrington, immigrated to the United States from Barbados as a teenager. Her mother was a skilled seamstress, but did not work outside the home. Marr remembers her mother's emphasis on correct behavior and lessons in looking presentable and wearing ironed clothes when one left the house. One of Marr's maternal relatives worked on the Panama Canal. Marr recalls being impressed by the well-kept records in Barbados.

Video Oral History Interview with Carmel Marr, Section  
A2004\_158\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:22 2004/09/13

Carmel Marr's father, William Preston Carrington, was born in Barbados. He aspired to be a lawyer, but his father refused to send him to law school in England, which caused a rift between the two. As a young man, Carrington immigrated to Brooklyn, New York City where he operated a real estate business with his brother. Marr was raised in Brooklyn; her mother was very strict and walked

her to and from P.S. 35 elementary school every day. The two would also go to the movies together. Marr took dance lessons as a child, traveled on family vacations to African American resorts such as Kings Lodge in Otisville, New York and overheard West Indian relatives and friends debate politics in her house. Marr, after skipping several grades in elementary school, attended high school in Brooklyn. Marr's father wanted her to be a lawyer to fulfill his unrealized dreams. She remembers doing imitations of ZaSu Pitts to entertain her classmates and compares the public school education today with that of her childhood.

Video Oral History Interview with Carmel Marr, Section  
A2004\_158\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:59 2004/09/13

Carmel Marr graduated from high school in Brooklyn, New York City in the early 1940s. She then attended Hunter College of the City University of New York where she majored in political science. After graduating from Hunter in 1945, she attended Columbia University Law School in New York City at a time when there were only eleven women in her law school class. Marr was named head of the moot court team by the dean of the law school, but some students refused to be on the team with her because of her race and the dean cancelled the prestigious Stone competition the year Marr qualified to compete. Marr graduated law school in 1948 and practiced law at the firm of Dyer & Stevens Esquires. In 1953, she was appointed to the United States Mission to The United Nations as a legal advisor. From 1967 to 1968, Marr served a senior legal officer to the United Nations Secretariat and wrote a book on UN procedures. She recalls working with UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. and her impressions of UN advisor Ralph Bunche.

Video Oral History Interview with Carmel Marr, Section  
A2004\_158\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:23 2004/09/13

Carmel Marr was appointed as a legal advisor to the United States Mission to the United Nations in 1953. As part of her duties, she flew to Washington, D.C. on a weekly basis to meet with President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his staff. From 1967 to 1968, Marr was a

senior legal advisor to the UN Secretariat, during which time she wrote a book on UN procedures. Marr befriended President of the UN General Assembly Angie Elizabeth Brooks and knew UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold. She was embarrassed by the way UN officials treated delegates from African countries. In 1968, Marr was appointed to the New York State Human Rights Appeal Board and in 1971, was the first African American woman appointed to the New York State Public Service Commission. She recalls working with a corrupt official on a gas regulatory committee. Marr also served on the board of the New York State Training School for Girls in Hudson, New York. She talks about her husband HistoryMaker Warren Marr, II.

Video Oral History Interview with Carmel Marr, Section  
A2004\_158\_001\_005, TRT: 0:24:24 2004/09/13

Carmel Marr has been an active member of the Republican Party since the 1940s. Marr describes her hopes for the African American community and how she would like to be remembered. She also reflects upon her life and legacy.