

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Glory Van Scott

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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>	Van Scott, Glory
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 16, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:05:34).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Dancer, theater professor, and stage actress Glory Van Scott (1947 - ) has acted in several plays and movies, and has written eight musicals. She has worked on many tributes to Katherine Dunham, and was awarded the first Katherine Dunham Legacy Award in 2002. She is also founded of Dr. Glory's Children's Theater. Van Scott was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 16, 2004, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_163
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Producer, performer, educator, and civic activist, Glory Van Scott, was born in Chicago, Illinois, June 1, 1947. Van Scott's parents, Dr. and Ms. Thomas Van Scott, were raised near Greenwood, Mississippi and shared some Choctaw and Seminole ancestry. The trauma of Van Scott's cousin Emmett Till's murder in 1955 did not diminish the benefit of the art, dance, and drama classes at The Abraham Lincoln Center, where she met Paul Robeson and Charity Bailey. Van Scott spent summers in Ethical Culture Camp in New York. A student at Oakland Elementary School and Dunbar High School, Van Scott finished high school at Ethical Culture High School in New York City.

That summer at the Society for Ethical Culture's Encampment for Citizenship, Cicely Tyson referred Van Scott to actress Vinette Carroll, who mentored Van Scott in theatrical arts. Soon Van Scott was moving easily between modeling for the Wilhelmina Agency and performing; a principal dancer with the Katherine Dunham, Agnes DeMille, and Talley Beatty dance companies, she also joined the American Ballet Company. Van Scott appeared on Broadway in *House of Flowers*, with Pearl Bailey in 1954; *Kwamina* in 1961; *The Great White Hope* in 1968; *Billy No-Name* in 1970; and *Rhythms of the Saints* in 2003. Van Scott played the Rolls Royce Lady in 1974's film, *The Wiz*.

While pursuing her career in the performing arts, Van Scott earned her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Goddard College, and her Ph.D. from Antioch College's Union Graduate School. For ten years Van Scott taught theater at Bucknell University's Pennsylvania School for the Arts, and, later, Theater As Social Change at Fordham University. Van Scott became a Breadloaf Writers Scholar and the author of eight musicals including *Miss Truth*. Van Scott founded Dr. Glory's Youth Theatre. Lipincott published Van Scott's first children's book, *Baba and the Flea*.

Van Scott served as coordinator for WNET's *Dance in America - Katherine Dunham: Devine Drum Beats* in 2000,

and produced *The Katherine Dunham Gala* at Carnegie Hall, and the 2003 *Tribute to Fred Benjamin* at Symphony Space. Van Scott was also project director and artistic coordinator for the Alvin Ailey Company's *The Magic of Katherine Dunham* and co-producer of the National Black Touring Circuit, with Woodie King, Jr. of *New York Dance Divas*. Van Scott, immortalized in bronze by Elizabeth Catlett in 1981, was awarded the first Katherine Dunham Legacy Award in 2002.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Glory Van Scott was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson and Larry Crowe on September 16, 2004, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Dancer, theater professor, and stage actress Glory Van Scott (1947 - ) has acted in several plays and movies, and has written eight musicals. She has worked on many tributes to Katherine Dunham, and was awarded the first Katherine Dunham Legacy Award in 2002. She is also founded of Dr. Glory's Children's Theater.

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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:

Van Scott, Glory

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Van Scott, Glory--Interviews

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African American actresses--Interviews

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African American women composers--Interviews

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African Americans in the performing arts--Interviews

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Youth workers--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:**

Dancer

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

ArtMakers

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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 Glory Van Scott, September 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).

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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 Glory Van Scott, Section A2004\_163\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:56 ?  
Glory Van Scott first saw the Katherine Dunham Technique of dance at a performance by the Talley Beatty Company in Chicago, Illinois. Van Scott first met HistoryMaker Katherine Dunham backstage after watching a Katherine Dunham Company performance in the 1950s. She joined the Katherine Dunham School of Dance and Theater after she realized she did not want to pursue modern dance and left the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance, both in New York, New York. In 1999, Glory Van Scott reunited three generations of Dunham dancers at a gala in Dunham's honor funded by the National Endowment for the Arts at Carnegie Hall in New York, New York. Van Scott describes Dunham's pioneering dance and humanitarian work, the Dunham Technique, the culture of the Katherine Dunham Company, and the nature of Dunham dancers. She tells stories about jumping onto a moving train in France and being stopped at the border of Lebanon during her travels with the company. Van Scott also explains how she received her name.
- Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott, Section A2004\_163\_001\_002, TRT: 0:09:15 ?  
Glory Van Scott talks about her favorites among HistoryMaker Katherine Dunham's choreographic works, lessons she has learned from Dunham, and Dunham's legacy.
- Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott, Section A2004\_163\_002\_003, TRT: 0:30:24 ?  
Glory Van Scott was born in Chicago, Illinois on June 1, 1947 to Dora DeMyers and Thomas Van Scott. Her parents grew up near Greenwood, Mississippi. Van Scott's maternal grandmother, Matilda Stackhouse Brown, was Choctaw and worked as a designer and seamstress; after Van Scott's mother was harassed by white men, they left the South to become part of Chicago society. Van Scott's mother was a nurse at Provident Hospital in Chicago who instilled in her a sense of social and political consciousness. Her paternal grandparents were Seminole and owned a large farm. Although her paternal grandparents occasionally visited Chicago, Van Scott's mother and maternal grandmother discouraged her from learning Seminole myths and from visiting the South. . Van Scott's brother, Jerry Scott, was a well-known child actor. Her mother's cousin was Mamie Till. Van Scott recalls the effect of Emmett Till's murder on her family. She also explains her politics and her mode of participation in the civil rights movement.  
African American actresses--Interviews.  
African American women composers--Interviews.  
African Americans in the performing arts--Interviews.  
Youth workers--Interviews.
- Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott, Section A2004\_163\_002\_004, TRT: 0:29:58 ?  
Glory Van Scott's mother and father met at Provident Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, where her mother was a nurse and her father a general practice

physician. Her mother was president of a number of Chicago social clubs while her father was committed to offering healthcare services to communities who could not otherwise afford them. Van Scott enjoyed family picnics at Chicago's beaches and was allowed to attend churches of her choosing. Van Scott attended a local neighborhood elementary school in Chicago. She excelled in language arts and history classes and appeared in a school drama production of Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess.' Her inclination toward the performing arts was nurtured at Abraham Lincoln Center in Chicago, where she was inspired by Paul Robeson, folk singer Charity Bailey and dance teacher Edna Summerville-Oats. She attended Dunbar High School until she transferred to Ethical Culture Fieldston School upon her move to New York, New York, where she also attended Encampment for Citizenship.

Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott, Section A2004\_163\_002\_005, TRT: 0:30:03 ?

Glory Van Scott's mother and grandmother had close relationships with Reverend Joseph H. Jackson of Olivet Baptist Church in Chicago, Illinois although Scott herself was never a member of the church. While growing up in Chicago, Van Scott attended Dunbar High School and dance classes at Abraham Lincoln Center. Van Scott obtained a scholarship to attend Ethical Culture Fieldston School in New York, New York during her senior year. She also attended its associated summer program, Encampment for Citizenship. Upon graduation, she was encouraged by Cicely Tyson to seek out training from Vinnette Justine Carroll, under whose direction Van Scott obtained many early roles. She matriculated at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont in a program that allowed her to travel for shows. Van Scott was principal dancer in 'Porgy and Bess' and for the Katherine Dunham Company, Agnes de Mille American Heritage Dance Theatre and Talley Beatty's Company. Van Scott credits Katherine Dunham as the principal source of her success.

Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott, Section A2004\_163\_002\_006, TRT: 0:29:52 ?

Glory Van Scott stopped the production of a racially degrading play at the St. Louis Mundy Opera with the help of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Urban League and her godmother and director of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing Frances Levenson. She spearheaded a successful strike alongside Arthur Mitchell against a similarly pejorative musical in which they were principal dancers. Van Scott toured in Israel and the United States with 'Porgy and Bess.' She was the Rolls Royce Lady in 'The Wiz.' She wrote the musical 'Miss Truth' about the life of Sojourner Truth. While it showed at the Apollo Theater in New York, New York, Van Scott was harassed by a stalker from whom the theater received a bomb threat. Van Scott wrote 'Final Ladder' as a tribute to the fire fighters of September 11, 2001. She founded Dr. Glory's Children's Theatre in the 1970s; at the time of the interview she had recently revived the group. She also explains her artistic philosophy.

Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott, Section A2004\_163\_002\_007, TRT: 0:26:06 ?

Glory Van Scott graduated from Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont with a bachelor's degree in liberal arts. She went on to earn a master's degree in theater arts from Goddard as well and a Ph.D. in philosophy of education and theater arts from Antioch College Union Graduate School. She has taught at Fordham University in New York, New York and Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. In 1981, Van Scott's bust was cast in bronze by HistoryMaker Elizabeth Catlett. Van Scott was honored with the National Black Theater Festival Living Legend Award and by The Black Academy of Arts and Letters. She reflects upon her life and legacy, the importance of reading for children, her

family's opinion of her success, and her religious beliefs. She describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community and how she would like to be remembered. Van Scott concludes her interview by narrating her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott, Section  
A2004\_163\_VanScott\_Glory\_06\_MED\_002\_01, TRT: 0:29:36

Video Oral History Interview with Glory Van Scott, Section  
A2004\_163\_VanScott\_Glory\_06\_MED\_002\_02, TRT: 0:09:39