

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Guidry, Carolyn Tyler, 1935-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry,
Dates:	November 15, 2004 and October 5, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:33:00).
Abstract:	Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry (1937 -) was the first woman to be appointed a major metropolitan charge when she was assigned to Walker Temple in Los Angeles, California. Guidry was later elected a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, becoming only the second woman to hold that title. Guidry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 15, 2004 and October 5, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois and Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_192
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry was born in Jackson, Mississippi on August 25, 1937. As a child, she attended St. Matthew Baptist Church for grade school, where eight grade levels were taught in a single classroom. After high school, Tyler Guidry earned her associate's degree from J.P. Campbell College in Jackson, and later studied economics at Tougaloo College. In 1977, she graduated from Los Angeles Bible School and she received her master's of theology from Fuller Theological Seminary in 2004.

After she completed her A.A. degree, Tyler Guidry began working for the NAACP, where she was the women's voter registration chair. In 1972, she and her husband, Cary Tyler, drove across country to California, where she was hired by the Security Pacific Bank. The following year, she left the bank as she answered her calling to the ministry. After graduating from the Los Angeles Bible School, Tyler Guidry became the pastor of the First A.M.E. Church in Indio, California, where she remained for the next six years. In 1983, she moved to Bakersfield, California, where she led the congregation at Cain Memorial A.M.E. Church until 1989. That year, she was appointed to Walker Temple A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles, making her the first female to be appointed to a major metropolitan church in the A.M.E. Church. In 1994, Tyler Guidry was appointed to be the first female presiding elder in the Fifth Episcopal District. On July 5, 2005, Tyler Guidry was elected to become only the second female bishop in the A.M.E. Church.

In addition to her ministry, Tyler Guidry has been involved with a number of other organizations. She has served as the secretary of the board of the John F. Kennedy Hospital in Indio, president of the Riverside County Board of Mental Health and treasurer of the national board of One Church One Child, among many other groups. She is also a contributor to the fourth edition of "Those Preaching Women." Her first husband, Cary Tyler, passed away in 1988.

Bishop Tyler Guidry resides in Los Angeles, where she lived with her second husband, Don Guidry, who passed away in 2007. She has six children, thirteen grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren.

Bishop Tyler Guidry was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 5, 2004 and November 15, 2004.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 15, 2004 and October 5, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois and Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry (1937 -) was the first woman to be appointed a major metropolitan charge when she was assigned to Walker Temple in Los Angeles, California. Guidry was later elected a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, becoming only the second woman to hold that title.

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:

Guidry, Carolyn Tyler, 1935-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Guidry, Carolyn Tyler, 1935---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Occupations:

Bishop

HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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 Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, November 15, 2004 and October 5, 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 Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, Section A2004_192_001_001,
TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry was born on August 25, 1937 in Jackson, Mississippi. Her mother, Mary Wheaton Phillips, was born in Laurel, Mississippi but moved to Jackson when her parents divorced and completed high school there. She met Guidry's father, James Jackson, who was passing through town and gave birth to Guidry at seventeen as a single mother. Guidry was mainly raised by her maternal grandmother; while her mother stayed elsewhere and worked in a box factory, Guidry lived with her grandmother, step-grandfather and young aunt. She had extended family nearby, including a great-aunt who was very protective of her teenage daughters. Guidry was a curious child and mature for her age. She attended first grade in a one-room church where one teacher taught all eight grades. Guidry talks about segregation, especially regarding the application of the separate but equal doctrine to schools in Jackson, Mississippi. She remembers playing with neighborhood children and the smell of dirt after a rainy day.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, Section A2004_192_001_002,
TRT: 0:30:45 ?

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry went to church often growing up, as her maternal grandmother was a founder of Institutional A.M.E. Church in Jackson, Mississippi. On the day World War II ended, her neighborhood celebrated. Guidry often listened to 'Fibber McGee and Molly' and 'Amos 'n' Andy' on the radio with her family. She also loved reading romance novels and the funnies in the newspaper as a child. In second grade, she attended Mary C. Jones Elementary School in Jackson where she was secretly taught African American history by her teacher against the wishes of the Jeanes Supervisors. Guidry attended Brinkley High School in 1950 for two years and honed her writing ability. She began to understand the full horror of the Jim Crow system with Willie McGee's execution in 1951. At this time, she also sang in the church choir and taught Sunday School, where she encountered the uncle of one of her students, who later became her first husband. Guidry comments on the present-day teaching of African American history.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, Section A2004_192_001_003,
TRT: 0:29:23 ?

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry was courted by Kerry Tyler throughout 1951. While staying with her mother in New Orleans, Louisiana, Guidry invited Tyler to Thanksgiving dinner. He asked her mother for permission to marry Guidry. Her mother said no until she realized Guidry was determined to marry anyway. Guidry and Tyler returned to Jackson and wed in 1953. They eventually had eight children, two of whom died as infants. Guidry left high school, but her husband convinced her to obtain her G.E.D. and finish her education when he saw her disrespected as a domestic. She completed her associates degree at Bonner-Campbell College in Edwards, Mississippi. Her college coursework enabled her to obtain a job in the campaign office of Reverend R.L.T. Smith, a member of the NAACP running for U.S. Congress. Through this work, she met Medgar Evers. As she became increasingly involved in the Civil Rights Movement, she saw the cruelty of Southern whites, especially during events leading up to the Freedom Summer of 1964.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, Section A2004_192_001_004,
TRT: 0:30:19 ?

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry registered African American voters during the freedom summer of 1964. Her ten-year-old son was jailed with a group of

demonstrators during this time. Her civil rights work acquainted her with Robert Parris Moses and HistoryMakers Dorie and Joyce Ladner. In 1964, Guidry moved her family to Los Angeles, California for her husband's job. She worked at Security Pacific Bank until 1973 when she was called to ministry. She attended Los Angeles Bible Training School in Los Angeles until 1977. She pastored First A.M.E. Church in Indio, California, helping the church grow and gain financial stability during her six years there. She was then moved to a church in Bakersfield, California for another six years, during which time her husband passed away. She moved to Los Angeles to pastor Walker Temple A.M.E. Church in 1989 and became the first woman appointed elder of a metropolitan A.M.E. church. In 1995 she wrote a resolution to elect the first woman bishop in the A.M.E. church by 2000.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, Section A2004_192_001_005, TRT: 0:24:58 ?

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry worked to ensure that the 1995 resolution calling for the election of a woman bishop in the A.M.E. church by 2000 was honored. The resolution was upheld despite calls by some to delay implementing it until 2004. Guidry hoped to be the first woman appointed bishop in the A.M.E. church. While that honor ultimately went to HistoryMaker Bishop Vashti McKenzie, Guidry was elected second woman bishop of the A.M.E. church in 2004 alongside Bishop Sarah Frances Davis, with the help of HistoryMaker Jamye Coleman Williams. Guidry talks about her responsibilities and challenges as bishop, including the development of spiritual growth. Guidry explains the history of activism in the A.M.E church. She describes her personal theology, hopes and concern for the African American community and how she hopes to be remembered. Guidry reflects upon her life, her ministerial career and her legacy. She concludes by narrating her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, Section A2004_192_002_006, TRT: 0:07:35 ?

Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry narrates her photographs.