

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Alyce Faye Wattleton

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wattleton, Faye
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Alyce Faye Wattleton,
Dates:	February 4, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:44:50).
Abstract:	Nonprofit chief executive and chief executive officer Alyce Faye Wattleton (1943 -) was the first African American woman to serve as president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Wattleton also serves as president of the Center for the Advancement of Women. Wattleton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 4, 2005, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_037
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Alyce Faye Wattleton was born on July 8, 1943, in St. Louis, Missouri; her mother was a traveling preacher and her father was a construction worker. While her mother traveled, Wattleton spent each school year in the care of church members in different states; before entering high school, she had not attended the same school two years in a row. In 1959, at the age of sixteen, Wattleton earned her high school diploma from Calhoun High School in Port Lavaca, Texas, where she was active in the band, the thespian club, and the basketball team.

Wattleton received her B.S. degree in nursing from Ohio State University in 1964 and went on to earn her M.S. degree in midwifery and maternal and infant health from Columbia University in 1967. Wattleton began her nursing career as an instructor at Miami-Dade Hospital in Ohio, teaching nursing obstetrics and labor and delivery; in 1970 she was named executive director of the Dayton-Miami Valley chapter of Planned Parenthood.

In 1978, Wattleton became the youngest individual at the time, and the first African American woman, to serve as president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA). During Wattleton's fourteen-year tenure, PPFA became one of the nation's largest charitable organizations. Under Wattleton's leadership, the organization secured federal funding for birth control and prenatal programs, fought against efforts to restrict legal abortions, and legalized the sale of RU-486 (a French-made birth control pill which terminates pregnancies) in the United States.

After her resignation from the PPFA in 1992, Wattleton hosted a Chicago-based television talk show. In 1995, Wattleton became president of the Center for the Advancement of Women, an independent, nonpartisan non-profit research and education institution dedicated to advocating for the advancement of women.

Wattleton has received numerous awards and honors, including the American Humanist Award; the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Humanitarian Award; the American Nurses Association's Women's Honor in Public

Service; the Jefferson Award for the Greatest Public Service performed by a Private Citizen; the Fries Prize, for service to improving public health; and the PPFA's Margaret Sanger Award. Throughout her career, Wattleton has been awarded fourteen honorary degrees. In 1993 Wattleton was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, and in 1996, published her memoir *Life on the Line*.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Alyce Faye Wattleton was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on February 4, 2005, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit chief executive and chief executive officer Alyce Faye Wattleton (1943 -) was the first African American woman to serve as president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Wattleton also serves as president of the Center for the Advancement of Women.

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:

Wattleton, Faye

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wattleton, Faye--Interviews

African American women executives--Interviews

Health reformers--Interviews

Human rights workers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Occupations:

Nonprofit Chief Executive

Chief Executive Officer

Nurse

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|MedicalMakers

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 Alyce Faye Wattleton, February 4, 2005. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 6/7/2022 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 Alyce Faye Wattleton, Section A2005_037_001_001, TRT: 0:31:20 2005/02/04

Alyce Faye Wattleton was born on July 8, 1943 in St. Louis, Missouri to George Wattleton and Ozie Garrett Wattleton. Wattleton's maternal grandfather, Eugene Garrett, was the grandson of a freed slave and a white father, and he became a minister and business owner. He married Ola Garrett. Wattleton's mother was born in Farmhaven, Mississippi. Growing up, she handled most of the domestic chores and picked cotton on the family's land. Finding this unfair, she went to live with family friends in Ohio. Wattleton's father was born in 1912 in Hobson City, Alabama and worked as an unskilled laborer. Wattleton's parents met and married in St. Louis. In her childhood home, Wattleton was surrounded by extended family. She recounts an amusing story of attempting to fly as a child and describes her childhood neighborhood. After World War II, Wattleton's mother, who had become a minister in her youth, travelled with the Church of God. Wattleton stayed with her mother's parishioners as they moved across the country.

African American women executives--Interviews.

Health reformers--Interviews.

Human rights workers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Alyce Faye Wattleton, Section A2005_037_001_002, TRT: 0:30:53 2005/02/04

Alyce Faye Wattleton was a gifted student. At the age of five, she advanced to second grade at Washington Montessori Elementary School. She remembers the smell of barbecue, the city sounds and sleeping outside in Forest Park during hot summer nights in St. Louis. Her mother's travels as a minister for the Church of God meant that Wattleton often lived with various church members. She reflects upon the impact of moving so frequently. In 1954, her family reunited when her mother became a pastor in Columbus, Nebraska, where they were the only black family in the city. When her mother was asked to resign, the family moved to Franklin, Louisiana. Wattleton listened to the music of Ray Charles, Ike and Tina Turner, and James Brown during her teenage years. She attended Tougaloo Preparatory School and Calhoun High School in Port Lavaca, Texas. She studied nursing at The Ohio State University from 1959 to 1964. Her family struggled to pay for tuition, and Wattleton became more socially active on campus.

Video Oral History Interview with Alyce Faye Wattleton, Section A2005_037_001_003, TRT: 0:31:22 2005/02/04

Alyce Faye Wattleton decided to specialize in maternal and child health after working at the Nationwide Children's Hospital. Wattleton taught obstetrics nursing at the Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. She recounts her own experience of having an illegal abortion. While completing her master's degree

in nursing at Columbia University, she worked at Harlem Hospital. She returned to the Miami Valley Hospital as the assistant director of the nursing program. Wattleton served on the board of the Dayton Urban League until they refused to support the Equal Rights Amendment. She joined the board of Planned Parenthood, became the executive director in Dayton, and was elected to the National Board. In 1978, she was chosen as president of Planned Parenthood. Wattleton describes the backlash against Roe v. Wade and the Webster v. Reproductive Health Services decision that barred Medicaid funding for abortions. Wattleton remembers her parents' civil rights activities and her mother's opposition to her career.

Video Oral History Interview with Alyce Faye Wattleton, Section A2005_037_001_004, TRT: 0:11:15 2005/02/04

Alyce Faye Wattleton talks about the movement to undo the Roe v. Wade decision and the issues impacting minority women who seek abortion services. In reflecting upon recent legal challenges, Wattleton asserts that Roe v. Wade had essentially been overturned for many women since it was no longer being interpreted as it was in 1973. In describing how minority women often face barriers to accessing abortion, Wattleton also notes the ways in which racial identity does not solely determine women's experience with abortion. After fourteen years, Wattleton resigned as president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. She concludes the interview by reflecting upon her life.