

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Darlene Lorraine McKinnon

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McKinnon, Darlene Lorraine, 1943-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Darlene Lorraine McKinnon,
Dates:	April 1, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:20:30).
Abstract:	Federal government official Darlene Lorraine McKinnon (1943 -) was the deputy director of the Small Business Administration in San Francisco, CA. McKinnon was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 1, 2005, in San Francisco, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_092
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Darlene Lorraine McClaine McKinnon was born on July 28, 1943 in Baltimore, Maryland. She graduated from an all-girls public high school, Western High School, in Baltimore in 1961. McKinnon attended Morgan State University and received her B.A. degree in business from the University of the Redlands in Redlands, California in 1985.

From 1974 to 1979, McKinnon was the Assistant to the Development Director for the Rouse Company, a real estate development company that pioneered the development of new cities including Columbia, Maryland. In 1977, she became the procurement director for the Council for Equal Business Opportunity in Maryland. Since 1979, McKinnon has held several positions in the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in California. Over the years, she has held the positions of Assistant Director of Business Development and District Director of Development. Following her graduation from the SBA's prestigious District Directors Candidate Program and moving to San Francisco from San Diego, McKinnon became the Deputy District Director for the San Francisco District Office. McKinnon has been responsible for the start-up of key programs such as the Entrepreneur Centers in Silicon Valley, East Bay and San Francisco and the SBA Business Coaches.

In addition to her work with the SBA, McKinnon has operated her own small business, TheaterGoers International, and instructed business courses at San Diego State University. She is the co-founder of the San Diego Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners; is a board member of the Northern California Supplier Development Council; and a member on the President's Board of the Children's Hospital of Oakland. McKinnon is listed in Who's Who Among Black Americans, has been recognized by Soroptomists International and received its Woman of Achievement Awards. In 1992, she was named one of San Diego's 100 Local Business and Community Leaders. In 2003, McKinnon was named one of the Fifty Most Influential Women in Silicon Valley. She serves on numerous advisory boards and community organizations and has a passion for fine arts, photography and cars.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Darlene Lorraine McKinnon was conducted by Loretta Henry on April 1, 2005, in San Francisco, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Federal government official Darlene Lorraine McKinnon (1943 -) was the deputy director of the Small Business Administration in San Francisco, CA.

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:

McKinnon, Darlene Lorraine, 1943-

Henry, Loretta (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

McKinnon, Darlene Lorraine, 1943---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Small Business Administration

Occupations:

Federal Government Official

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|PoliticalMakers

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 Darlene Lorraine McKinnon, April 1, 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 Darlene Lorraine McKinnon, Section A2005_092_001_001,
TRT: 0:29:30 2005/04/01

Darlene Lorraine McKinnon was born on July 28, 1943 in Baltimore, Maryland. Her mother, Ruth Oliver, was born on December 2, 1923 in Baltimore, Maryland to James Thurston and Lillie Thurston. Her mother grew up very sheltered in Baltimore and married young. Following the death of McKinnon's

father in 1955, she worked as a legal secretary. She later re-married James Oliver. McKinnon's father, Percy McClaine, Jr., was born on September 23, 1927 in Ivy, Virginia to Beulah McClaine and Percy McClaine, Sr. His family left Virginia, and he grew up in Baltimore across the street from McKinnon's mother. He joined the U.S. military after high school and served in Hawaii during World War II. After returning to Baltimore, he started a taxi company with a friend. He was killed in 1955 when he had an epileptic seizure while driving. McKinnon, while growing up in Baltimore, was close to both of her grandmothers, who taught her to set high expectations and enter the world fearlessly. McKinnon also narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Darlene Lorraine McKinnon, Section A2005_092_001_002, TRT: 0:28:40 2005/04/01

Darlene Lorraine McKinnon's paternal grandmother hosted large birthday celebrations for McKinnon every year. McKinnon lived with her parents and her paternal grandmother in the African American Cherry Hill neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland where she attended Carter G. Woodson Elementary School, took dance and piano lessons, and had discussions about current events with her family over the dinner table. Her family circulated among various churches, but they attended church regularly. After her father's death when she was twelve years old, McKinnon and her mother moved to an apartment closer to downtown Baltimore. Her mother's ensuing grief and alcoholism forced McKinnon to become independent at a young age. She learned to type and was able to earn money from this skill. After desegregation, she chose to enter Western High School in Baltimore where she aspired to become a writer, worked on the school paper and made several good friends, including future actress Tamara Dobson and Rebecca Ladew.

Video Oral History Interview with Darlene Lorraine McKinnon, Section A2005_092_001_003, TRT: 0:29:50 2005/04/01

Darlene Lorraine McKinnon attended Morgan State College in Baltimore, Maryland for two years. During this time, she saw Miles Davis perform and Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C. After leaving school, McKinnon worked at various typing and secretarial jobs. She met her first husband and moved to California, but soon after left the abusive relationship. She remained active in various social causes during her time in California. Upon hearing of her paternal grandmother's stroke, McKinnon returned to Maryland and worked for the Rouse Company. When the real estate market crashed, McKinnon was hired at the U.S. Small Business Administration and moved with her second husband, Clem McKinnon, and her mother to San Diego, California. After divorcing her second husband, McKinnon obtained her bachelor's in business from University of Redlands in San Diego. She also became part-owner of TheaterGoers International. McKinnon remembers her paternal aunt's influence.

Video Oral History Interview with Darlene Lorraine McKinnon, Section A2005_092_001_004, TRT: 0:31:00 2005/04/01

Darlene Lorraine McKinnon owned TheaterGoers International with a friend in San Diego, California; together, they organized many events and drew heavily on member participation for its success. After President Bill Clinton's election, McKinnon applied for the District Director Candidate Program at the U.S. Small Business Administration and was hired as a deputy district director in San Francisco, California. While there, McKinnon and the director made many advances, including partnering with the private sector, especially companies in Silicon Valley. This included a partnership with Cisco Systems that led to the

SBA Cisco Systems San Jose Entrepreneurship Center, which provides centralized access to the resources small businesses need. McKinnon also works with several civic organizations that focus on education and entrepreneurship. She describes her heroines and how she repaired her relationship with her mother. She also talks about her love of cars and photography and her frustrations with politics.

Video Oral History Interview with Darlene Lorraine McKinnon, Section A2005_092_001_005, TRT: 0:21:30 2005/04/01

Darlene Lorraine McKinnon has seen the U.S. Small Business Administration change its role during her twenty-six year career in the organization. While the organization used to focus more on providing technical assistance and support to small business owners, it now acts more as a guarantor for lenders to small businesses. McKinnon fears that this change, coupled with the increasing focus on data rather than the acumen and drive of entrepreneurs, will hinder small businesses. In considering her future plans, McKinnon notes her enjoyment at running TheaterGoers International. McKinnon talks about the importance of history, supporting black-owned businesses and informed voting. She shares her concerns about the African American community, her values and her advice for young people. She reflects upon her life, legacy and how she would like to be remembered.