

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Frances Hooks

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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>	Hooks, Frances, 1927-2016
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Frances Hooks,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 13, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:15:20).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Elementary school teacher Frances Hooks (1927 - 2016 ) co-founded Women in the NAACP (WIN). Hooks was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 13, 2005, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_162
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator and consultant Frances Louise Dancy Hooks was born February 23, 1927, in Memphis Tennessee. Hooks's parents, Georgia Harriet Graves Dancy and Andrew Jackson Dancy raised her on Edith Street in Memphis. Hooks attended St. Anthony La Rose Elementary School and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School where Hooks was sophomore class president in 1944. Hooks later attended Howard, Fisk, and Wilberforce Universities, graduating in 1949.

Hooks taught second grade in a Shelby County, Tennessee Rosenwald School. Hooks met Benjamin Hooks at the Tri-State Fair; the couple were married in 1951. In 1956, the Hooks desegregated the all white Parkway East community.

Hooks put her career as a teacher and guidance counselor on hold in the late 1960s to support the activities her husband, Benjamin Hooks, who by then was a businessman, lawyer, judge, and minister. Hooks became her husband's assistant, secretary, advisor, and traveling companion. Moving to Washington, D.C. in 1972, Hooks helped her husband become the first black appointee to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

In 1977, Hooks's husband became executive director of the NAACP; she also became involved with the organization, and formed Women in the NAACP (WIN) with Earleen Bolden in 1980. WIN raised money for emergency relief by putting on fashion shows and social events; she also co-founded The People Power Project, which promoted black and white dialog, and the Memphis Volunteer Placement Program, which is now run by the Rotary Club.

Renewing their vows in 2001, Hooks and her husband raised one daughter, Patricia.

Hooks passed away on January 14, 2016.

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## **Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Frances Hooks was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 13, 2005, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Elementary school teacher Frances Hooks (1927 - 2016 ) co-founded Women in the NAACP (WIN).

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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:

Hooks, Frances, 1927-2016

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hooks, Frances, 1927-2016--Interviews

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African American women civic leaders--Interviews

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African American civil rights workers--Interviews

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African American women educators--Interviews

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### Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## **Occupations:**

Elementary School Teacher

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

EducationMakers

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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 Frances Hooks, July 13, 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 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 Frances Hooks, Section  
A2005\_162\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:30 2005/07/13

Frances Hooks was born on February 23, 1927 in Memphis, Tennessee. Her mother, Georgia Graves Dancy, was born on January 31, 1902 in Memphis to a woman from Jackson, Tennessee whose family came from the Jacobs plantation in Huntsville, Alabama. Hooks' maternal grandfather, a white man, fled Memphis after breaking a bottle over a customer's head in the hotel where he worked. Hooks' mother lived in Philadelphia after her mother remarried, but returned to Memphis where she finished high school and then began teaching. Hooks' father, Andrew Dancy, was born in Canton, Mississippi. After finishing high school, he worked as a bellhop at the Gayoso House Hotel. Hooks' parents met at the Hotel Men's Improvement Club in Memphis and regularly saw each other at Avery Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. After saving enough money, Hooks' father built a house in an upwardly mobile neighborhood of Memphis for their family in 1929; this became Hooks' home until her marriage to HistoryMaker Reverend Benjamin Hooks.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances Hooks, Section  
A2005\_162\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:20 2005/07/13

Frances Hooks grew up on Edith Street, known as Striver's Row, in Memphis, Tennessee. A tomboy, Hooks loved playing with her siblings and neighborhood friends outdoors. She attended St. Anthony of Padua School until third grade when she switched to LaRose Elementary School in Memphis. At LaRose, she often fought with other students who thought she and her sister were conceited. At Booker T. Washington High School, one of the city's two black high schools, she aspired to become a doctor. With her sister finishing early due to summer

school classes, both she and Hooks graduated in 1944 and matriculated at Howard University in Washington, D.C. At Howard, Hooks pledged Delta Sigma Theta, but left after her first year because the colorism she experienced caused her to perform poorly. After transferring to Wilberforce University in Ohio, she remained for two years until the school's split with the A.M.E. church led her to enter Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, which she graduated from in 1949.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances Hooks, Section  
A2005\_162\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:30 2005/07/13

Frances Hooks studied physical education and science at Fisk University while Charles Spurgeon Johnson served as president and Arna Bontemps was librarian. After graduating, both Hooks and her sister were denied jobs in the Memphis, Tennessee school district when the woman hiring claimed their alma maters and family's income meant they did not need to teach. Hooks worked at a Rosenwald School in Shelby County, Tennessee for a year and a half teaching grades one through eight, with four grades in the same classroom. She met HistoryMaker Reverend Benjamin Hooks at the Tri-State Fair in 1950, and they began dating. After marrying in 1951, they lived with his family, then hers, until they purchased a house on Parkway in Memphis, the first black family to do so. Due to Hooks' husband's involvement with the SCLC, she hosted Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph D. Abernathy and other civil rights leaders at her home. Hooks also talks about voting by African Americans in Memphis prior to the Civil Rights Era.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances Hooks, Section  
A2005\_162\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:30 2005/07/13

Frances Hooks was living in Memphis, Tennessee when Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. After hearing a white clerk celebrate his death, Hooks left the grocery store in anger. Her husband, HistoryMaker Reverend Benjamin Hooks, was the first black to serve as judge in Memphis, and Hooks was assigned police protection after she received a death threat. Her husband was also the first African American appointed to the Federal Communications Commission, and Hooks

encountered bigotry at FCC social events. Though an NAACP member since her youth, Hooks became more involved when her husband served as its executive director. She co-founded Women in the NAACP (WIN) with Earleen Bolden and others to increase women's involvement and leadership in the organization. WIN focused on disaster relief and called attention to populations neglected by the American Red Cross in South Carolina after Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Hooks reflects upon her concerns for the African American community, her life and legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances Hooks, Section  
A2005\_162\_001\_005, TRT: 0:15:30 2005/07/13

Frances Hooks, while teaching, saw students who were academically prepared for elite colleges, but needed support for the racism they would encounter there. Concerned by this, Hooks founded the Memphis Volunteer Placement Program, which put white students in contact with black students applying to Ivy League and majority-white institutions, and was eventually taken over by the Memphis Rotary Club. Following the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Hooks and others in Memphis, Tennessee started the People's Power Project in an effort to foster dialogue between white, black and Jewish youth. The project led to long-lasting relationships among the participants. Hooks remembers her first interracial encounter as a child, which occurred when visiting white relatives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and singing at her twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. She shares her thoughts on Bill Cosby's 2005 comments and concludes the tape by narrating a photograph.