

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Helene Gayle

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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>	Gayle, Helene, 1955-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Helene Gayle,
<b>Dates:</b>	October 14, 2006
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2006
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:47:00).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Epidemiologist Dr. Helene Gayle (1955 - ) was president and CEO of CARE, the international poverty fighting organization. She served as director of the National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention of the Center for Disease Control; the director of the HIV, TB and Reproductive Health Program for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and the Assistant Surgeon General and Rear Admiral in the United States Public Health Service. Gayle was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 14, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2006_118
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Epidemiologist and public health administrator Dr. Helene D. Gayle was born on August 16, 1955, in Buffalo, New York. The daughter of social worker Marietta Spiller Dabney Gayle and businessman Jacob Astor Gayle, she attended Lancaster, New York's Court Street Elementary School and Lancaster Middle School. Moving back to Buffalo, Gayle graduated with honors from Woodlawn

Junior High School and then from Bennett High School in 1972. Briefly attending Baldwin-Wallace College, she graduated from Barnard College in New York City with her B.S. degree in psychology. Deciding to pursue medicine, Gayle earned her M.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania, where she served as president of the Student National Medical Association. Gayle went on to earn her Masters of Public Health degree from John Hopkins University. She did her pediatric internship and residency at Children's Hospital National Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Gayle was selected to enter the epidemiology training program at Atlanta's Center for Disease Control (CDC) in 1984. By 2001, she had risen to director of the National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention of the CDC. Throughout, Gayle concentrated on the effects of AIDS on children, adolescents and families. In the early 1990s, she began to investigate the global ramifications of the disease and authored numerous reports on the real risk factors involved with AIDS. In so doing, she became one of the foremost experts on the subject, appearing on ABC's *Nightline* and other news and information programs. Gayle also served as a medical researcher in the AIDS Division of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Gayle warned about substance abuse and advocated female condoms and vaginal virucides. In 2001, Gayle joined the Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation as director of the HIV, TB and Reproductive Health Program and was responsible for administering its \$300 million dollar budget. At the same time, she was named Assistant Surgeon General and Rear Admiral in the United States Public Health Service. In 2006, Gayle was chosen as the new president and CEO of CARE, the international poverty fighting organization.

Gayle is the recipient of many honors, including: the U.S. Public Health Service achievement medal, in 1989; the National Medical Association Scroll of Merit Award, 2002; Barnard College, Columbia University, Barnard Woman of Achievement, 2001 and the Women of Color, Health Science and Technology Awards, Medical Leadership in Industry Award in 2002. Gayle sits on many community boards. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Helene Gayle was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 14, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Epidemiologist Dr. Helene Gayle (1955 - ) was president and CEO of CARE, the international poverty fighting organization. She served as director of the National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention of the Center for

Disease Control; the director of the HIV, TB and Reproductive Health Program for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and the Assistant Surgeon General and Rear Admiral in the United States Public Health Service.

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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**

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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:**

Gayle, Helene, 1955-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews  
Gayle, Helene, 1955---Interviews

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Epidemiologists--Interviews

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Health services administrators--Interviews

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Endowments--Officials and employees--Interviews

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African American women physicians--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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CARE/International

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## **Occupations:**

Epidemiologist

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

MedicalMakers

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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 Dr. Helene Gayle, October 14, 2006. 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 Dr. Helene Gayle, Section A2006\_118\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:50 2006/10/14

Dr. Helene Gayle was born August 16, 1955 in Buffalo, New York to Marietta Dabney Gayle and Jacob Gayle, Sr. Gayle's paternal grandparents, Rosa Saulsberry Gayle and Edward Gayle, were rural farmers in Alabama, and migrated to Buffalo with their ten children. Gayle's maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Black Britt, moved from Richmond, Virginia to Lackawanna, New York, where she worked as a beautician, and was active in the NAACP.

Gayle's father served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He then attended college, but left to open a business. Gayle's mother studied for her bachelor's degree at Fisk University, and later earned her master of social work degree from Columbia University. Gayle's parents met in Buffalo, and had five children. They relocated to the majority white suburb of Lancaster, New York, where Gayle was the only African American student at Court Street Elementary School. She learned about African American history from her mother. When her parents divorced, Gayle returned to Buffalo.

Epidemiologists--Interviews.

Health services administrators--Interviews.

Endowments--Officials and employees--Interviews.

African American women physicians--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Helene Gayle, Section  
A2006\_118\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:50 2006/10/14

Dr. Helene Gayle moved to Buffalo, New York, where she attended Woodlawn Junior High School, and was honored with the Jesse Ketchum Award upon graduation. Gayle recalls the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and how her father's store was protected from the riots that followed. From 1969, Gayle attended Bennett High School, where she was president of the black student union. She graduated in 1972. Gayle enrolled at Barnard College, where she was mentored by Inez Smith Reid, and obtained a degree in psychology. From 1976, Gayle attended the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, where she served as president of the Student National Medical Association. After medical school, Gayle attended Johns Hopkins University, where she graduated with a master's degree in public health in 1981. Gayle then completed her medical residency in pediatrics at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington D.C. In 1984, Gayle joined the staff of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Helene Gayle, Section  
A2006\_118\_001\_003, TRT: 0:27:50 2006/10/14

Dr. Helene Gayle entered the Epidemic Intelligence Service at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in 1984,

where she specialized in child malnutrition. In 1987, Gayle completed her preventative medicine residency, which focused on child mortality in Africa, and became a staff epidemiologist for the CDC's AIDS program. She was promoted to assistant director of minority HIV policy, and later ran the CDC's international portfolio on AIDS. In the early 1990s, Gayle directed the AIDS program of the U.S. Agency for International Development. From 1993 to 1994, Gayle ran the CDC branch in Washington D.C. She was promoted to director of the Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention, becoming the CDC's first African American director. In this role, she worked with the Congressional Black Caucus to fund HIV programs in communities of color. From 2001 to 2006, Gayle served as the HIV program director for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, then became the CEO of Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Helene Gayle, Section A2006\_118\_001\_004, TRT: 0:21:30 2006/10/14

Dr. Helene Gayle describes advancements in HIV research, including the role of vaccines and medication. She emphasizes the importance of prevention and community involvement to decrease the spread of the disease. Gayle talks about the role of philanthropists, such as Warren Buffett, Bill Gates and Melinda Gates, in public health efforts. In 2006, Gayle became CEO of Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, which aimed to reduce global poverty. Gayle reflects upon how her trips to Africa made her a better global citizen, and informed her experiences as an African American. She describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community, including her hope for improved educational opportunities, and her concern that African American youth do not feel connected to their communities. Gayle also reflects upon her life and legacy.