

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Marie Brown

Overview of the Collection

- Repository:** The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
- Creator:** Brown, Marie Dutton
- Title:** The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Marie Brown,
- Dates:** January 8, 2007
- Bulk Dates:** 2007
- Physical Description:** 7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:06:04).
- Abstract:** Literary agent, magazine editor, and book editor Marie Brown (1940 -) opened her own literary agency, Marie Brown and Associates in Harlem, New York, becoming one of the few African American agents in the book world. Brown represented authors Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Randall Robinson, Dr. Johnetta Cole, Susan Taylor and Van Whitfield. Brown was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 8, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
- Identification:** A2007_003
- Language:** The interview and records are in English.
-

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Literary agent and publishing consultant, Marie Dutton Brown was born on October 4, 1940 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Josephine and Benson Dutton. Brown attended a Catholic elementary school and a public high school. She graduated from Germantown High School in 1958 and went on to Penn State University where she received her B.S degree in 1962.

Brown became a teacher for the Philadelphia Public School System in 1963. In 1965, as a multicultural coordinator, she helped to introduce multicultural education into the school system, which included African American history.

In 1967, Brown decided to take a different direction in her career. She took a position as a general publishing trainee at Doubleday Book Publishing in New York City, but in 1969, she married and relocated with her husband to California. There, from 1969 until 1972, Brown worked in bookstores and did freelance work. Then, she returned to New York City and to Doubleday Book Publishing as a senior editor.

Brown went on to become the Editor-In-Chief of *Elan* magazine in 1982 and sales manager and assistant buyer for Endicott Booksellers in 1984. At a time when publishers were no longer accepting unsolicited manuscripts, Brown decided to take her expertise and open her own literary agency, Marie Brown and Associates in Harlem, New York, becoming one of the few African American agents in the book world. Her agency provided marketing, promotions and consulting along with publishing. In 1990, Brown began to concentrate on book publishing because she cherished the idea of working creatively and developmentally with the authors. Brown has represented authors Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Randall Robinson, Dr. Johnetta Cole, Susan Taylor and Van Whitfield.

Brown is on the Board of Directors of the Caribbean Cultural Center, To Be Continued Kids Theater and Frank Silvera Black Theater.

Brown was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 8, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Marie Brown was conducted by Denise Gines on January 8, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Literary agent, magazine editor, and book editor Marie Brown (1940 -) opened her own literary agency, Marie Brown and Associates in Harlem, New York, becoming one of the few African American agents in the book world. Brown represented authors Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Randall Robinson, Dr. Johnetta Cole, Susan Taylor and Van Whitfield.

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:

Brown, Marie Dutton

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brown, Marie Dutton--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Literary Agent

Magazine Editor

Book Editor

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers|MediaMakers

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 Marie Brown, January 8, 2007. 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).

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 Marie Brown, Section
A2007_003_001_001, TRT: 0:29:58 2007/01/08

Marie Brown was born on October 4, 1940 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Josephine Brown Dutton and Benson L. Dutton, Sr. Born in Farmville, Virginia, Brown's maternal grandmother, Marie Elizabeth Brown, married Waverly Brown, a carriage driver in New York City. He died shortly after their move to Philadelphia. Her grandmother attended Philadelphia's Mt. Zion Baptist Church, as much of its congregation had migrated from Farmville. Brown describes her paternal grandparents, Bert Dutton and Beatrice Dutton, as quiet and proud. Her grandfather worked at Philadelphia's Horn and Hardart food automat. Brown's father was one of the first African Americans to study civil engineering at Pennsylvania State University. He worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps, and taught at Hampton Institute in Virginia. Brown grew up in Hampton, where she saw Pearl Primus and William Warfield perform. On campus, her parents befriended faculty members like J. Saunders Redding, Julia Mason Moses and William H. Moses, Jr.

Video Oral History Interview with Marie Brown, Section
A2007_003_001_002, TRT: 0:29:08 2007/01/08

Marie Brown attended George P. Phenix Training School in Hampton, Virginia, where her favorite subjects were

geography and history. She remembers the May Day celebrations at Hampton Institute; visiting the all-black Buckroe Beach; and catching crabs for her mother to cook. Upon moving to Nashville, Tennessee, Brown's family lived temporarily with Calvin McKissack, co-founder of McKissack and McKissack architectural firm, while her father taught at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State College. Brown recalls Ralph Bunche speaking at an assembly at Ford Greene Elementary School; transferring to St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School; then attending George E. Washington Junior High School, where she met her friend, Aaronetta Hamilton Pierce. An avid reader, Brown's parents purchased the World Book Encyclopedia for her. She learned to shoot with a BB gun, played marbles and jacks, and was a Girl Scout. Her middle class, African American neighborhood was very close to the all-white Vanderbilt University.

Video Oral History Interview with Marie Brown, Section
A2007_003_001_003, TRT: 0:30:37 2007/01/08

Marie Brown recalls the popularity of country music in Nashville, Tennessee, and going to Grand Ole Opry. She learned square dances and Irish dances at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School, and listened to rhythm and blues music with her family. Her father was active with the NAACP and National Urban League. As a teenager, she saw Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at Nashville's First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. In Nashville, Brown attended George E. Washington Junior High School and Pearl High School, where she was encouraged by teachers like Mildred Freeman. After moving with her family to Philadelphia, Brown had a difficult time adjusting to Germantown High School, where her teachers and guidance counselors doubted her academic abilities. Upon graduating, Brown attended the Ogontz campus of Pennsylvania State University in Abington, Pennsylvania. She commuted from her home in Philadelphia with group of students that included Herbert L. Coverdale, Jr., who went on to become a psychologist.

Video Oral History Interview with Marie Brown, Section
A2007_003_001_004, TRT: 0:29:49 2007/01/08

Marie Brown studied psychology at Pennsylvania State

University, and pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. After moving onto the University Park campus of Pennsylvania State University, she lived in Pollock Halls. Upon graduation, Brown worked as a substitute teacher. She obtained a position at Philadelphia's General Louis Wagner Junior High School, where Bebe Moore Campbell was a student. Brown then joined the Office of Integration and Intergroup Education, where she coordinated the introduction of multicultural curricula to the Philadelphia public school system. She also volunteered at Fellowship House, a Quaker school. Brown was recruited to Doubleday and Company Inc.'s trainee program in New York City after meeting Loretta Barrett, and eventually became Barrett's editorial assistant. Brown worked on 'Vibration Cooking,' a cookbook by Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor, who sang with Sun Ra and His Intergalactic Infinity Arkestra. Brown remained at Doubleday and Company Inc. through 1969, and then moved to California.

Video Oral History Interview with Marie Brown, Section
A2007_003_001_005, TRT: 0:31:00 2007/01/08

Marie Brown married Kenneth Brown in 1969. They moved to Los Angeles, California, where she worked at Bronze Bookstore, and met professors Clyde Taylor and Boniface Obichere. She also edited Mervyn M. Dymally's journal, 'The Black Politician: A Journal of Current Political Thought.' A childhood friend of Bill Cosby, Brown's husband was one of the early illustrators of the Fat Albert cartoon characters, but was not credited for his work. After the birth of their daughter, Laini Brown, in 1971, Brown and her husband moved to New York City. She worked at Doubleday and Company Inc. as an editor for authors like Alexis De Veaux, Norma Jean Darden and Chester Higgins, Jr. She also met Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who worked for a time at Doubleday and Company Inc. In 1981, Brown became editor in chief of Elan magazine, which was founded by Jonathan Blount. When the magazine ceased publishing, Brown worked as a freelance editor, then joined the staff of Endicott Booksellers in New York City.

Video Oral History Interview with Marie Brown, Section

A2007_003_001_006, TRT: 0:26:12 2007/01/08

Marie Brown worked as an assistant buyer and assistant manager at Endicott Booksellers in New York City. At the request of a former colleague, she represented J. Randy Taraborrelli's book, 'Diana: A Celebration of the Life and Career of Diana Ross,' and became a literary agent. She eventually founded Marie Brown Associates to accommodate her growing clientele. She represented Vy Higginson and Tonya W. Bolden's book, 'Mama, I Want to Sing,' and authors like Carl Weber, Randall Robinson and Wallace Ford. She also explains how she obtains her clients. Brown remembers her lifelong friends, Shirley Poole, Ed Bradley and Linda Tarrant-Reid. She reflects upon her life, and how she would like to be remembered. Brown also shares a message for future generations.

Video Oral History Interview with Marie Brown, Section
A2007_003_001_007, TRT: 0:09:20 2007/01/08

Marie Brown narrates her photographs.