

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jackson-Ransom, Bunnie, 1940-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom,
Dates:	July 13, 2010 and March 27, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007 and 2010
Physical Description:	10 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:13:21).
Abstract:	Marketing entrepreneur and music manager Bunnie Jackson-Ransom (1940 - 2023) owned and operated Atlanta's Airport Amusement Concessions and managed the musical groups, The SOS Band and Cameo. Jackson-Ransom was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 13, 2010 and March 27, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_113
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom was born on November 16, 1940 in Louisburg, North Carolina to Burnell James Hayes and Elizabeth Day Hayes. She attended North Carolina College in Durham, North Carolina, graduating magna cum laude with a B.S. degree in business and a minor in education. Jackson-Ransom then received her M.S. degree in business from North Carolina Central University School of Business and Economics in 1969.

Jackson-Ransom was hired as an instructor of business and supervisor of secretarial services at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina. She then joined Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc., where she was a contract specialist, program coordinator, director of planning and program development during her five-year tenure. In 1965, she met and married Maynard Jackson, who went on to become the first black mayor of Atlanta in 1973; Jackson-Ransom and Jackson divorced in 1976.

In 1975, Jackson-Ransom founded firstClass, Inc., a company specializing in marketing, community affairs, communications and public relations. With firstClass, Inc., she has worked with many clients including The National Conference of Black Mayors, Waste Management, Inc. and the Burger King Corporation. Jackson-Ransom is responsible for designing and implementing many on-going community action projects for her clients, working to include the goals of the urban community that benefit and enhance the lives of the least fortunate. In 1978, Jackson-Ransom worked with Bernadette Carey, publicity director of Fashion Fair Cosmetics, on a line of black cosmetics. She would later marry Raymond Ransom, a bass player for the musical group, Brick. From 1979 to 1983, Jackson-Ransom was owner and operator of Airport Amusement Concessions at Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta. She also managed the careers of several performing artists between 1978 and 1988 when she served as Chief Administrative Officer of a conglomerate company under the umbrella of Atlanta Artists. For Atlanta Artists Management, Jackson-Ransom served as president. She managed multi-million dollar record sales, toured the world with performances and promotions, negotiated production deals for her artists (which included CAMEO and Larry Blackmon, The SOS Band and Cashflow) and carried her artists to gold and platinum record

status. She also served as an instructor at Georgia State University teaching a course called “Artist Representation” from 1981 to 1990 and in 1995.

Jackson-Ransom was a member of the Atlanta League of Women Voters (organizer of the Cascade Heights Branch), Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Executive Committee member of the Atlanta branch of the NAACP, the Azalea Chapter of The Links, Inc., the Metropolitan Atlanta Coalition of 100 Black Women and the National Council of Negro Women. Her awards included Outstanding Young Women in America (1970-1980). Jackson-Ransom was listed in *Who's Who in American Women*, *Who's Who in Georgia* and *Who's Who in Black America* and in *Dollars and Sense Magazine* as one of “America’s Top 100 Black Business and Professional Women” in 1985. She was also listed among Atlanta’s “Top 100 Women of Influence” by the Atlanta Business League from 1997 to 2005 and received a community service award from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in January of 2008.

Jackson-Ransom was the proud mother of four (Beth Jackson Hodges, Brooke Jackson Edmond, Rae Yvonne Ransom and Maynard H. Jackson, III), grandmother of five (Isabella Daisy Jackson, Luke Benjamin Jackson, Hayes Jackson Edmond, Brooke Lee Irene Edmond and Cassandra Elizabeth Edmond) and an active member of Cascade United Methodist Church.

Jackson-Ransom was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 27, 2007.

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom passed away on February 2, 2023 at the age of 82.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom was conducted by Denise Gines on July 13, 2010 and March 27, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 10 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Marketing entrepreneur and music manager Bunnie Jackson-Ransom (1940 - 2023) owned and operated Atlanta's Airport Amusement Concessions and managed the musical groups, The SOS Band and Cameo.

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:

Jackson-Ransom, Bunnie, 1940-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jackson-Ransom, Bunnie, 1940- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Marketing Entrepreneur

Music Manager

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers|MusicMakers

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 Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, July 13, 2010 and March 27, 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 5/30/2023 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 Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_001_001, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom was born on November 16, 1940 in Louisburg, North Carolina to Elizabeth Day Hayes and Burnell Hayes. Her paternal grandfather, George Hayes, was born to the children of slaves in North Carolina, and became a carpenter. Jackson-Ransom's father studied at Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he was also a pitcher in the Negro baseball leagues. Jackson-Ransom's maternal grandparents, Sarah Hockaday Day and McKinney Day, raised her mother in Washington, D.C. After graduating from high school, she moved to Baltimore, Maryland, and met Jackson-Ransom's father while he was visiting for a baseball game. They married; and, after Jackson-Ransom's paternal grandfather died, moved to North Carolina. There, Jackson-Ransom's father graduated from Johnson C. Smith University, earned an M.B.A. degree from North Carolina College at Durham and became a school principal in Louisburg; while her mother worked as a seamstress. They raised Jackson-Ransom in Louisburg, a close-knit, rural community.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_001_002, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom grew up in Louisburg, North Carolina, where her family belonged to the South Main Street Baptist Church. She listened to musical groups like The Teenagers, and watched television with her neighbors. Jackson-Ransom was educated at the Franklin Country Training School in Durham, North Carolina, and was often bullied during her early schooling. Later, she was influenced by her commerce teacher, Mrs. Conway; and graduated from high school as valedictorian. Jackson-Ransom went on to study business at the North Carolina College at Durham. She left school during her sophomore year to marry Donald Burke; and had her first child, Elizabeth Jackson Hodges. After living for a time with Burke's family in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, Jackson-Ransom decided to reenroll in school. She returned to Durham with her parents, who provided childcare and financial support while she completed her education. During this time, Jackson-Ransom also worked at the James E. Shepard Memorial Foundation, Inc.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_001_003, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom worked in administration at the James E. Shepard Memorial Foundation, Inc. while completing her undergraduate degree at the North Carolina College at Durham. In 1958, she participated in the sit-in protests at F.W. Woolworth Company lunch counters, after the movement was initiated by students in Greensboro, North Carolina. Although she joined the demonstrations in order to make friends, she became committed to the Civil Rights Movement. Upon completing her bachelor's degree, Jackson-Ransom began an M.B.A. degree program. She took leave for one year to teach at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, and then continued her graduate studies in Durham. There, she met law student Maynard Jackson while working at the College Inn. They began dating; and, after Jackson passed the bar, they moved to Atlanta, Georgia and married. There, Jackson-Ransom befriended activist Julian Bond; and began working for Economic Opportunity Atlanta, where she became director of the planning department.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_001_004, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom directed the planning department at Economic Opportunity Atlanta, where she worked to build community centers in Atlanta, Georgia. At the time, she was married to attorney Maynard Jackson, who worked for the Emory Community Legal Services Center. In 1968, the couple had their first child, Brooke Jackson Edmond; and sent for Jackson-Ransom's oldest child, Elizabeth Jackson Hodges, who was living with Jackson-Ransom's parents. Jackson-Ransom's husband was often encouraged to run for political office, but was reluctant to do so until the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. He decided to run for a seat in the U.S. Senate; and, although he lost the election, carried the vote in Atlanta. Soon after, he was elected to serve as vice mayor under Atlanta Mayor Sam Massell. In 1970, Jackson-Ransom left her job to focus on her volunteer work, including a project that assisted formerly incarcerated women. Her son, Maynard Jackson, III, was born in 1971.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_001_005, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom began working as a public relations consultant while her husband, Maynard Jackson, was serving as vice mayor of Atlanta, Georgia. In this role, she organized an exhibit of Ernie Barnes' artwork at Atlanta's High Museum of Art in 1972. The following year, Jackson-Ransom's husband became the mayor of Atlanta. During his term, Jackson-Ransom cofounded the firstClass, Inc. marketing firm with Anne Allison, Linda Gulley and Billye Aaron. She divorced her husband one year later, in 1976; and went on to become the sole owner of firstClass, Inc. Her first client was football player John Gilliam; and she soon secured corporate accounts, including The Coca-Cola Company and several black-owned franchises of the McDonald's Corporations. Jackson-Ransom also attracted a celebrity clientele, and eventually shifted her focus to the music industry. She represented trumpeter Donald Byrd, and led a tour for the Jackson 5. After working with the band Brick, Jackson-Ransom married their bassist, Ray Ransom.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_001_006, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom managed musical acts like The S.O.S. Band, Cameo and Brick during the late 1970s. In 1979, she married Brick's bassist, Ray Ransom; and their daughter, Rae Ransom Coleman, was born in 1981. In order to spend more time with her four children, Jackson-Ransom decided to scale

back her public relations firm, firstClass, Inc.; although she retained corporate clients like The Coca-Cola Company and Burger King. She also secured a contract with the Cascade United Methodist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, where her family belonged to the congregation. During this time, Jackson-Ransom was active in the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and enrolled her children in Jack and Jill of America, Inc. In addition, she joined The Links organization and the NAACP Atlanta Branch; and served on several boards, including the Georgia Council on Human Relations. She also talks about her older children, Elizabeth Jackson Hodges, Brooke Jackson Edmond and Maynard Jackson, III.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_002_007, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom was recruited by civil rights activist Floyd McKissick to participate in the sit-in movement in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960. Although she was arrested, she was never jailed, and tempered her involvement in order to care for her young daughter. Later, Jackson-Ransom became a teacher at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she met Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, who was then a student leader at the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina. Jackson-Ransom began dating Maynard Jackson in Durham, North Carolina; and moved with him to Atlanta, Georgia, where they married in 1965. Their marriage became strained when her husband decided to run for the U.S. Senate in 1968, and then won the vice mayoralty of Atlanta in 1969. During his tenure, he founded the law firm of Jackson, Patterson, and Parks; and began campaigning for mayor against the incumbent Mayor Sam Massell. In 1974, Jackson-Ransom's husband became the first black mayor of Atlanta.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_002_008, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom divorced Maynard Jackson in 1976; and went on to work in the music industry through her public relations firm, firstClass, Inc. She represented musicians like Yusef Lateef and Donald Byrd; and managed tour publicity for the Jackson 5, as well as the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's tour with Lena Horne. She began dating bassist Ray Ransom while representing his band, Brick; and, after they married in 1979, ended their professional relationship. She also managed The S.O.S. Band, and producer Larry Blackmon's Cameo. In the 1980s, Jackson-Ransom divorced Ransom, and left the music business. From that time, she focused on her corporate clients at firstClass, Inc. She also opened a game room in the William B. Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport with Janis Alexander and Tollie Bedenbaugh Tolan Hartsfield, and partnered with Fluttie Enterprises to develop advertising space at bus stops operated by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_002_009, TRT: 0:10:13 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom published her first book, 'Getting the Word Out: How to Market Your Ministry,' in the 2000s. Around that time, she began hosting workshops for religious organizations, including a United Methodist group in Florida, and a number of African Methodist Episcopal churches. Jackson-Ransom describes her plans for the future of her career; and talks about her daughter, Rae Ransom, and grandchildren. She concludes the interview by reflecting upon her legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, Section A2007_113_002_010, TRT: 0:12:48 ?

Bunnie Jackson-Ransom narrates her photographs.

