Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator: Fairley, Charlestine, 1938-
Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley,
Dates: April 25, 2007
Bulk Dates: 2007
Physical Description: 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:25:40).
Abstract: Academic administrator Charlestine Fairley (1938 - ) dedicated her career to improving education, substance abuse prevention, and counseling services to the disadvantaged. Fairley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 25, 2007, in Edgewater, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification: A2007_162
Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Academic administrator and social activist Charlestine Romelle Dawson Hickson Fairley was born on July 24, 1938 in Greenville, Mississippi to Ida Harris Dawson and Kemp Dawson. She was educated in Gulfport, Mississippi, where she graduated from 33rd Avenue High School in 1956. She briefly attended Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi before transferring to Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. During a summer break she met William F. Hickson, Jr. a dental student at Meharry Medical College. After a year of courtship, Fairley dropped out of college to move to Nashville, Tennessee to marry Hickson. After the birth of the couple's three children--Nina, Franklin, and Oneal-- Fairley
Charlestine Fairley was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 25, 2007.
This life oral history interview with Charlestine Fairley was conducted by Denise Gines on April 25, 2007, in Edgewater, Maryland, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator Charlestine Fairley (1938 - ) dedicated her career to improving education, substance abuse prevention, and counseling services to the disadvantaged.

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:

Fairley, Charlestine, 1938-
Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Fairley, Charlestine, 1938---Interviews

African American educators—Interviews

African American college administrators—Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Academic Administrator

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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.
Charlestine Fairley was born on July 24, 1938 in Greeneville, Mississippi to Ida Harris Blake and Kemp Dawson, Jr. Her paternal great-grandfather was a former slave of Native American ancestry. Fairley’s maternal great-grandmother, Ida Brooks, was a midwife who owned land in Greeneville. Originally from Louisiana, Fairley’s maternal grandmother, Emma Darris Harris, migrated to Greeneville, where she married Fairley’s maternal grandfather, Len Harris. Fairley’s father was born in Sunflower County, Mississippi to sharecroppers Rosie Farmer Dawson and Kemp Dawson, Sr. He moved to Greeneville at a young age, where he met and married her mother, and worked as a mechanic. Fairley was raised by
her paternal grandparents in Indianola, Mississippi, while her parents worked in the shipyards in Seattle, Washington. After separating, Fairley’s mother moved to Chicago, Illinois while her father remained on the West Coast, where he later owned his own car service station and repair shop.

African American families--Mississippi.
Divorce.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007_162_001_002, TRT: 0:28:50 2007/04/25

Charlestine Fairley moved with her paternal grandparents, Rosie Farmer Dawson and Kemp Dawson, Sr., to a segregated community in Gulfport, Mississippi when she was four years old. There, her paternal grandmother sometimes worked as a pastry chef, and her paternal grandfather was employed as a laborer and electrician’s assistant. She was an active member of the Little Rock Baptist Church in Gulfport, where she was encouraged to become a teacher. She attended the segregated Gaston Point Elementary School until the third grade when she was bused to 33rd Avenue High School. There, she recited Margaret Walker’s poem, ‘For My People’ for an Omega Psi Phi Fraternity’s talent competition, which she won. She was motivated to pursue a college education by her principal, W.F. Calbert, who organized visits to nearby college campuses. Upon graduating in 1956, Fairley received a scholarship to attend Tougaloo College; and after one year, transferred to Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

African Americans--Mississippi--Gulfport.
African American Baptists.
African American universities and colleges--United States.
African American college students.
African American churches.
African Americans--Social life and customs.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007_162_001_003, TRT: 0:28:10 2007/04/25

Charlestine Fairley attended Southern University in Baton
Charlestine Fairley attended Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she joined Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. During her summer break, Fairley visited Chicago, Illinois, where she met her first husband, William F. Hickson, Jr., who was a dental student at Meharry Medical College. She left school and moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where they married and had three children. They later moved to Dover, Delaware, where Fairley finished her sociology degree at Delaware State College in 1963. She then relocated to New Jersey, and served as a medical caseworker for the Burlington County welfare department, where she focused on elderly patient care. After two years, Fairley moved to Orangeburg, South Carolina, where she taught sociology at Claflin University. She obtained her master’s degree in counseling education from South Carolina State College in 1969, and returned to Claflin University, where she was a counselor for the TRiO programs, and admired her supervisor, Alethia S. Worthy.

African American college students.
African American children--Social conditions--Mississippi.
Segregation--Mississippi.
Race relations--Mississippi--20th century.
Segregation--Southern States.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007_162_001_004, TRT: 0:29:50 2007/04/25

Charlestine Fairley counselled first generation college students through the Special Services for Disadvantaged Students program at Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina; and after four years, was promoted to coordinator for all of the university’s federal TRiO programs. Fairley later served as the director of the programs, and founded the TRiO Achievers Luncheon. In 1986, Fairley directed the University of South Carolina’s Special Services for Disadvantaged Students program. She also presided over the Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel conference, where she met her second husband, educator Richard Fairley. In 1990, she received her Ph.D. degree in education from the University of South Carolina in
Columbia, South Carolina, and moved to Washington, D.C., where she became a program officer for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ substance abuse prevention program. In 1992, she oversaw substance abuse prevention program in Anne Arundel County. Upward Bound Program (U.S.)--South Carolina.

Claflin College (Orangeburg, S.C.).

African American universities and colleges--United States.

African Americans--Marriage.

African Americans--Divorce.

Counseling in higher education.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007_162_001_005, TRT: 0:29:50 2007/04/25

Charlestine Fairley was hired by educator Charles W. Simmons in 1993 to serve as director of Sojourner-Douglass College, a private college in Edgewater, Maryland. She began with only ten students, and often held classes in her own home. By 1999, the institution had grown to two hundred students. To accommodate the larger student body, they purchased land in Annapolis, Maryland to build a school, but encountered a property owner in the majority white South River Colony community who attempted to deter them with a lawsuit. In 2004, the building was completed, and the school received a donation of forty acres of farm land from philanthropist Harrell Spruill. During this time, Fairley and her second husband, Richard Fairley, founded the CRF and Associates, Inc., an education consultancy firm. Fairley reflects upon her trip to Africa, her family, how she would like to be remembered, and shares her advice for future generations.

African Americans--Race identity.

Sojourner-Douglass College.

African American universities and colleges--United States.

African American social life and customs.

African Americans--Africa.