Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with C. Eileen Watts Welch

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616
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Creator: Welch, C. Eileen Watts

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with C. Eileen Watts Welch,

Dates: June 23, 2007

Bulk Dates: 2007

Physical Description: 6 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:57:19).

Abstract: Academic administrator C. Eileen Watts Welch (1946 - ) is Executive Director for Advancement at the Center for Child and Family Health, established by Duke University, the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and North Carolina Central University. Welch was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 23, 2007, in Durham, North Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2007_185

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Academic administrator Constance Eileen Watts Welch was born on March 28, 1946 in Durham, North Carolina to Dr. Charles DeWitt Watts, North Carolina’s first African American surgeon, and Lyda Constance Merrick Watts, a community volunteer. Welch’s family founded North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance, the oldest African American life insurance company. Her maternal great-grandfather, Dr. Aaron McDuffie Moore was Durham’s first black doctor and co-founder of North Carolina Mutual and the Durham Colored Library. Welch attended a segregated high school, Hillside High School, in Durham before heading to Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, where she received her B.A. degree.

Welch began her career in 1968 as a third grade teacher in Atlanta. She later taught in Arlington, Virginia when her husband was drafted for military service. She became a stay-at-home mother after the birth of her two sons in 1970 and 1972. Welch returned to work in the late 1970s and became founder and the chief operating officer of Book Art, Ltd., a chain of bookstores in Fairfax County, Virginia. In 1983, she was named regional manager of the Reston Employment Service where she designed marketing campaigns and negotiated contracts. In 1990, Welch was hired at Inova Health System where she worked in strategic planning, health promotion and disease prevention. In 1994, she was promoted to Director of Development for the Inova Annual Fund. In 1995, Welch earned her M.B.A. degree in public relations, management, and marketing.

After a long career in Virginia, Welch returned to North Carolina in 1996, when she was named Associate Dean of External Affairs at Duke University’s School of Nursing. In 2005, Welch was named Executive Director for Advancement at the Center for Child and Family Health, established by Duke University, the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and North Carolina Central University. Welch has also served as a lecturer and community
volunteer, serving The Links, Incorporated and the Durham County Library.

Constance Eileen Watts Welch was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 23, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with C. Eileen Watts Welch was conducted by Cheryl Butler on June 23, 2007, in Durham, North Carolina, and was recorded on 6 Betacam SP videocassettes. Academic administrator C. Eileen Watts Welch (1946 - ) is Executive Director for Advancement at the Center for Child and Family Health, established by Duke University, the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and North Carolina Central University.

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:

C. Eileen Watts Welch

Butler, Cheryl (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

C. Eileen Watts Welch--Interviews
African American academic administrators--Interviews.

African American health administrators--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Duke University

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.

Preferred Citation


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/9/2011 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, June 23, 2007
C. Eileen Welch slates the interview. Welch then discusses her family's history and background. Her father, Dr. Charles D. Watts, Sr., was the first African American surgeon in North Carolina. Her mother, Lyda Constance Merrick Watts, was the granddaughter of Aaron Moore, one of the founder's of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company—the oldest African American life insurance company. Welch's maternal grandmother, Lyda Moore Merrick founded the "Negro Braille Magazine" (now called the "Merrick Washington Magazine for the Blind"). Welch's family, a well-known and esteemed family in Durham, North Carolina, was involved in the community, founding the Durham Colored Library and other organizations that benefited the state's African American community.

African American families--North Carolina--Durham.
Moore, A. M. (Aaron McDuffie), 1863-1923
North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company
African American surgeons--North Carolina.
African Americans--North Carolina--Durham.
African Americans--Marriage--Southern States.
Duke University.
Negro braille magazine (Durham, N.C.).

C. Eileen Welch discusses her childhood in Durham, North Carolina. Welch came from the Merricks, a prestigious and well-respected family in Durham. Welch and her immediate family lived in the Merrick home. As a child living in North Carolina, Welch experienced racism and segregation. Both of her elementary schools, Pearson Elementary and Burton Elementary, were segregated and up until the ninth grade, her high school, Hillside High School was segregated. Welch recalls that she did not interact with white children until the late 1950s when she attended Camp Oak Hill in Pennsylvania. Welch then speaks about her successful parents and her relationship with them.

Segregation--North Carolina--Durham.
African American children--Education--North Carolina.
Segregation in education--North Carolina.

C. Eileen Welch recalls the race relations in Durham, North Carolina. She specifically speaks on her interaction with the Duke family, who are most well known for giving their money and name to Duke University. She then talks about North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company and the ways it benefited the black community. Welch discusses her education. She graduated from Hillside High School in 1964 and attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. She met her husband, James A. Welch, at college; he attended Morehouse College. They were married a year after Welch graduated with her B.A. degree. The couple then moved to Arlington, Virginia where Welch taught in an integrated elementary school where she was the only black teacher and there was one black student. She contrasts segregated versus integrated schools, including some of the negative experiences for black students in desegregated schools.
C. Eileen Welch discusses the births of her two sons in 1970 and 1972. Her husband was drafted into military service while the family lived in Arlington, Virginia. She left teaching to care for her children. The family then moved to Reston, Virginia where Welch worked a variety of jobs including owning a bookstore, Book Arts, Ltd. Welch began working for Inova Health Systems and attended George Mason University where she earned her M.B.A. degree in 1995. A year later, Duke University recruited her for their development campaign. Welch was appointed the Associate Dean of External Affairs of Duke University's School of Nursing and later the Executive Director for Advancement at the Center for Children and Family Health. She compares living in Durham as an adult to when she was child. Welch hopes her legacy is the work she and her family have done to better the black community. Welch then narrates family photographs.

Lyda Constance Merrick Watts, the mother of C. Eileen Welch, is interviewed and she slates the interview. She gives her favorites as ice cream, the season of fall, the color red, and her favorite vacation spots are New York and Washington. Watts describes her family's background and their influence in Durham, North Carolina. Watts recalls growing up in 1920s Durham. As a young woman, she worked at North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, the company her father founded. Watts talks about her background in music and religion. Then, she discusses her education. She attended Pearson Elementary School and then Hillside High School, both in Durham, North Carolina.

Lyda Constance Merrick Watts discusses the stringent segregation in Durham, North Carolina. Watts recalls that the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance had a cafeteria in the building because none of the restaurants nearby would serve blacks. Watts describes her last two years of high school, which were
spent at Palmer Memorial Institute, a black boarding school. After high school, she received her B.A. degree in economics from Talladega College. Watts recalls how she pursued a M.A. degree in economics at Columbia University. She had to return home before she could finish when World War II began. She met Dr. Charles D. Watts, Sr. while she was still in college. After they married, they moved to Washington, D.C. so Dr. Watts could attend Howard University's College of Medicine. When he received his M.D. degree in the 1940s, they moved back to Durham. Watts then talks about her family's legacy in Durham and narrates photographs.

Segregation--North Carolina--Durham.
North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company.
Palmer Memorial Institute (Sedalia, N.C.).
African Americans--Education (Higher).
Columbia University. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.
Talladega College.