

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Monique Greenwood

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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>	Greenwood, Monique
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Monique Greenwood,
<b>Dates:</b>	October 11, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:16:49).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Entrepreneur and publisher Monique Greenwood (1959 - ) was former editor and chief of Essence Magazine, and the owner of five successful bed and breakfast inns. Greenwood also authored two books, Go On Girl! Book Club Guide to Reading Groups and Having What Matters: The Black Woman's Guide to Creating the Life You Really Want. Greenwood was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 11, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_286
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Entrepreneur and publisher Monique Greenwood was born on June 22, 1959 in Washington, D.C. Greenwood attended Howard University where she graduated magna cum laude in 1981 with her B.A. degree in communications. In 1989, Greenwood married Glenn Pogue, a broadcast engineer for WNBC-TV.

Greenwood's family lived in the Washington, D.C. area for several generations. In

the 1920s, her grandfather, Benjamin Greenwood, operated a small grocery store in the southeastern part of the city. He later owned the Greenwood Transfer Moving and Storage Company, a business that was eventually listed as one of the United States top Black owned businesses. Greenwood was inspired by her grandfather's success. His example proved to her that racial discrimination could not stop a person who had the determination to succeed.

Not long after Greenwood's graduation from Howard University, she began working at Fairchild Publications. Greenwood stayed at Fairchild for fifteen years; among her achievements at Fairchild was the creation of *Children's Business*, which was a monthly trade magazine that provided information about children's apparel and other products. In 1992, Greenwood published her first book *Go On Girl! Book Club Guide to Reading Groups*. She was also the co-founder of the Go On Girl! Book Club, which is the largest African American book club in the United States.

In 1995, Greenwood and her husband opened their first Akwaaba Bed & Breakfast in Brooklyn, New York. The following year, she started working at *Essence* magazine, as a lifestyle and style director, where she stayed for five years. In 2000, Greenwood became editor and chief of *Essence* magazine. In 2001, Greenwood published *Having What Matters: The Black Woman's Guide to Creating the Life You Really Want*. After writing her second book, Greenwood realized what mattered most to her, so she resigned as editor and chief of *Essence* magazine to pursue her passion for inn keeping.

Along with her husband, Greenwood opened four more Akwaaba Bed & Breakfast Inns in New Jersey (2002, 2006), Washington, D.C. (2003) and New Orleans (2005). Greenwood is working on her third book which will be titled *Life Under New Management: How to Fire Your Job and Become Your Own Boss*.

Greenwood was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 11, 2007.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Monique Greenwood was conducted by Adrienne Jones on October 11, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Entrepreneur and publisher Monique Greenwood (1959 - ) was former editor and chief of *Essence* Magazine, and the owner of five successful bed and breakfast inns. Greenwood also authored two books, *Go On Girl! Book Club Guide to Reading Groups* and *Having What Matters: The Black Woman's Guide to Creating the Life You Really Want*.

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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

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®.

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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:

Greenwood, Monique

Jones, Adrienne (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Greenwood, Monique--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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## **Occupations:**

Entrepreneur

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Publisher

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

BusinessMakers|MediaMakers

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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 Monique Greenwood, October 11, 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).

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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 Monique Greenwood, Section A2007\_286\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:16 2007/10/11

Monique Greenwood was born on June 22, 1959 in Washington, D.C. to Joann Lemons Greenwood and Carl Greenwood. Her maternal grandparents, Virginia Lemons and Henry Lemons, lived in West Virginia, where her mother was born. Greenwood's paternal grandfather was a coal miner, and died at fifty seven years old, while her grandmother was a seamstress. She was active in Greenwood's childhood, and later moved to Ohio, where she wore a natural hairstyle for the first time. Greenwood's paternal grandparents, Catherine Greenwood and Benjamin Greenwood, owned a grocery store in Washington, D.C. After a competitor petitioned their supplier to halt their deliveries, her paternal grandfather purchased a truck, and went on to establish Greenwood Transfer Moving and Storage, Inc. After his death, her paternal aunt, Helen Greenwood Allen, managed the company, where Greenwood's father also worked. Although her paternal grandfather died before her birth, Greenwood was inspired by the story of his entrepreneurialism.

Video Oral History Interview with Monique Greenwood, Section A2007\_286\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:55 2007/10/11

Monique Greenwood grew up in Washington, D.C., where she had four siblings. She often fought with her older brother, Vaughn Greenwood, and was very protective of her younger twin brothers, Ronald Greenwood and Donald Greenwood. Her sister, Gina Greenwood Gayle, was seven years her junior. Greenwood's family was tight-knit, and celebrated holidays together through adulthood. Greenwood was attracted to leadership roles from an early age, and often negotiated with her friends' parents on their behalf. In Washington, D.C., she was active in her neighborhood association, and attended Barnard Elementary School, where her sixth grade teacher encouraged her to take initiative. While attending Rabaut Junior High School, Greenwood aspired to become a broadcast journalist, and admired news anchor J.C. Hayward. She was active at the Petworth United Methodist Church, where she wrote about church fashion in the newsletter. As a result of Greenwood's involvement, her family joined the congregation.

Video Oral History Interview with Monique Greenwood, Section A2007\_286\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:15 2007/10/11

Monique Greenwood campaigned for election as class president at Rabaut Junior High School in Washington, D.C. Upon graduating to high school, Greenwood was wary of the drug problems at her neighborhood school, and instead enrolled at the integrated Woodrow Wilson High School. There, Greenwood was sheltered from racial discrimination by the school's close-knit African American community. Greenwood excelled academically, and had an active social life. She often visited the Maverick Room, a go go nightclub, where she danced to the music of Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers. She aspired to enroll in the journalism program at Columbia University, but her parents could not afford it. Instead, Greenwood earned a scholarship from the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, Maryland, where fashion editor Nina Hyde was a member; and enrolled at Howard University. There, she befriended her classmates, Benilde Little and Lynne Scott, with whom she worked on the campus newspaper, The Hilltop.

Video Oral History Interview with Monique Greenwood, Section

A2007\_286\_001\_004, TRT: 0:31:01 2007/10/11

Monique Greenwood was offered an assistantship with Nina Hyde, the fashion editor of The Washington Post. However, Hyde encouraged her to accept a position in New York City at Fairchild Publications, Inc. instead. There, Greenwood was promoted to associate fashion editor after writing an award winning piece about African American consumers. She developed the Children's Business trade publication with editor Sarah Raphael, and served as its assistant editor under John Birmingham until being promoted to editor-in-chief. Greenwood also served on the diversity committee at Fairchild Publications, Inc., and encouraged administrators to hire employees of color. Greenwood created the Go On Girl! Book Club with her colleagues, Tracy Mitchell-Brown and Lynda Johnson. After it became a national organization, they co-authored a guide to running a successful book club. In 2001, Greenwood published 'Having What Matters,' a self-help book for African American women. She also recalls meeting her husband, Glenn Pogue.

Video Oral History Interview with Monique Greenwood, Section  
A2007\_286\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:36 2007/10/11

Monique Greenwood met her husband, Glenn Pogue, when he was locked out of his apartment in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. They began dating, and decided to marry after she returned to New York City from a management training program at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. Their wedding took place in Washington, D.C., and was attended by over three hundred guests. The couple purchased a brownstone townhouse in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, and leased the bottom floor until the birth of their daughter, Glynn Pogue. While vacationing in Cape May, New Jersey, the couple stayed in a bed and breakfast, and Greenwood decided to open a similar establishment in Brooklyn, which she named the Akwaaba Mansion. There, Greenwood met Essence magazine editor Susan Taylor, who hired Greenwood as a fashion editor. She was later promoted to lifestyle editor, and then to editor-in-chief of Essence magazine.

Video Oral History Interview with Monique Greenwood, Section  
A2007\_286\_001\_006, TRT: 0:30:36 2007/10/11

Monique Greenwood purchased the Awkaaba Mansion in Brooklyn, New York in 1995, and opened a bed and breakfast there. She hosted a diverse clientele of New York City natives and international guests. Greenwood eventually resigned from her position as the editor-in-chief of Essence magazine to focus on her hospitality business. At that time, her husband, Glenn Pogue, returned to work, although he continued to help with the inn's operations. Greenwood expanded her hospitality brand to the Akwaaba D.C. in Washington, D.C.; Akwaaba by the Sea in Cape May, New Jersey; and Akwaaba in the Bayou in New Orleans, Louisiana. She maintained her personal quarters at each of the inns, although she primarily resided in Brooklyn. There, Greenwood also opened the Akwaaba Café, which she eventually leased to another restaurateur, and purchased a nearby retail property. The building had numerous code violations, but Greenwood eventually completed the renovations, and leased the space to local business owners.

Video Oral History Interview with Monique Greenwood, Section  
A2007\_286\_001\_007, TRT: 0:17:10 2007/10/11

Monique Greenwood was active in several community organizations in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, including the Brownstoners of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Inc. She admired her neighbors' service to the community, and sought to promote local business ownership via her retail properties. At the time of the interview, she planned to leave her business, the Akwaaba Bed and Breakfast Inns, to her daughter, Glynn Pogue. Greenwood reflects upon the importance of economic empowerment in the African American community; her role models, including educator Mary McLeod Bethune and Essence magazine editor Susan Taylor; and her legacy.