

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robin Robinson

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Robinson, Robin, 1957- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Robin Robinson, |
| Dates: | February 7, 2008 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2008 |
| Physical Description: | 4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:53:30). |
| Abstract: | Television news anchor Robin Robinson (1957 -) was the anchorwoman for Chicago's Fox News and has won local Emmy Awards for her work. Robinson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 7, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2008_016 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Local Emmy Award winning television anchor Robin Carolle Robinson was born on August 4, 1957, in Chicago, Illinois, to Louie and Mati Robinson. Robinson was the second youngest in a family of six children. As a child, she was fascinated by her father's skills as a journalist, especially his ability to type quickly. In 1960, Robinson's father was promoted to West Coast editor of *Ebony* magazine, and her family relocated to Pomona, California. Then, in 1963, her family moved to Claremont, California, where Robinson was one of the first African Americans to integrate the predominantly white Claremont High School.

After graduating from high school, Robinson went on to attend San Diego State University where she pursued her B.A. degree in journalism. She then worked for KGTV in San Diego. In 1981, Robinson was hired as an anchor by WBBM-TV, Chicago's CBS affiliate. She worked there until 1987, when she joined the staff of WFLD-TV Fox News Chicago. As an anchorwoman for Fox, Robinson received numerous awards, particularly for her coverage of the Great Chicago Flood and the funeral of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

In 1995, Robinson became a spokesperson for the Child Abuse Prevention Series. In 1997, after her older brother Greg passed away, she helped produce a series on heroin addiction. Robinson is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the Chicago/Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, and serves on the board of directors of South Central Community Services, Inc.

Robinson lives in Chicago, Illinois.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Robin Robinson was conducted by Cheryl Butler on February 7, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Television news anchor Robin Robinson (1957 -) was the anchorwoman for Chicago's Fox News and has won local Emmy Awards for her work.

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:

Robinson, Robin, 1957-

Butler, Cheryl (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Robinson, Robin, 1957- --Interviews

African American television journalists--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

Women television journalists--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

Television news anchors--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

Occupations:

Television News Anchor

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Robin Robinson, February 7, 2008. 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 Robin Robinson, Section
A2008_016_001_001, TRT: 0:31:10 2008/02/07

Robin Robinson describes her family background. Her mother, Mati Delores Huckaby Robinson, was born on November 7, 1925 in Dallas, Texas. Mati's biological father was a German man, Mr. Mueller, who impregnated his domestic servant, Ruth Bell Huckaby. She was raised by Ruth Bell and her husband. Growing up in the suburbs of Dallas, she experienced significant racism from both blacks and whites. Robinson recalls her family's move from Chicago, Illinois to Pomona, California in 1960 and being unable to rent a hotel room because of their race; she recounts that Mati considered passing as white to get a room, but decided against it. Robinson's father, journalist Louie Robinson, Jr., was born in 1927 in Mineral Wells, Texas. His parents, Louie, Sr. and Bessie Robinson, divorced when he was young, and Bessie, a teacher, later married Tyler, Texas high school principle John Brown. Louie, Jr. was raised in part by his maternal grandfather, train car porter J.U. Wyatt, and his grandmother, Annie Wyatt.

African American families--California.

Rape victims--Family relationships--United States.

Passing (Identity).

Video Oral History Interview with Robin Robinson, Section
A2008_016_001_002, TRT: 0:24:35 2008/02/07

Robin Robinson talks about her childhood memories and her father, Louie Robinson, Jr.'s journalistic career. She recalls visiting her paternal grandfather, Enid, Oklahoma janitor Louie Robinson, Sr., in 1968 and experiencing Jim Crow laws for the first time. As the fifth of six children, she remembers moving to Pomona, California from Chicago, Illinois in 1957. Robinson's father, Louie, Jr., attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri for

journalism. After jobs in the U.S. Armed Forces and with an African American newspaper in Texas, and the Baltimore Sun in Maryland, he went to Chicago to work for HistoryMaker John H. Johnson, who published Ebony and Jet magazines. In 1957, he became Ebony/Jet's West Coast Editor, with responsibility for coverage of American stars. He was also consulted on racial issues during the 1965 Watts Riots. Robinson recalls the celebrities she knew growing up, including her godfather Sammy Davis, Jr., HistoryMakers Harry Belafonte and Nancy Wilson, and Sidney Poitier.

Johnson Publishing Company.

Middle class African Americans.

African Americans--Social conditions.

African American journalists--History.

Video Oral History Interview with Robin Robinson, Section
A2008_016_001_003, TRT: 0:29:00 2008/02/07

Robin Robinson recalls her school years in Pomona and Claremont, California. Her father, Louie Robinson, Jr.'s celebrity friends included Sidney Poitier and Bill Cosby. In Pomona, Robinson attended Arroyo Elementary School and lived in a neighborhood called Valwood, where she experienced white flight firsthand. As a consequence of the changing neighborhood demographics, her family moved to Claremont, where she attended Chaparral Elementary School, La Puerta Junior High School, and Claremont High School. At La Puerta, she was very involved in student government, and her mother, Mati Robinson, was involved in Myrlie Evers-Williams' campaign for Claremont City Council. This was in the late 1960s, and she recalls the anti-Vietnam War movement of the time, as well as attempts to integrate her high school through busing programs. These programs did not succeed very well, since the students from other districts tended to re-segregate themselves within the Claremont High School community.

Education, Higher.

African Americans--Education (Higher).

African Americans--California.

Robin Robinson talks about her adolescence, her brother Greg Robinson, and her choice to go into broadcast journalism. During the late 1960s, she witnessed a strong antiwar movement in Claremont, California, and her parents often had discussions about the right methods for social activism. In her spare time, Robinson would go horseback riding in the mountains and swim in the local reservoir. Her father, Louie Robinson, Jr., continued as the West Coast editor for Ebony and Jet magazines, writing about celebrities as well as sports figures like Muhammad Ali and Hank Aaron. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, her brother Greg became addicted to heroin, starting a decades-long struggle which would culminate in his 1996 death from AIDS-related illness. After graduating from high school in 1975, Robin decided to attend San Diego State University for journalism. She attributes her interest in broadcast journalism to her interest in real facts.

African Americans--Drug use.

Civil rights movements--United States.

Hippies--California.