

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Michele Norris

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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>	Norris, Michele
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Michele Norris,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 2, 2008
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2008
<b>Physical Description:</b>	2 Betacame SP videocassettes (0:58:20).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Radio host and television news correspondent Michele Norris (1961 - ) was the host of National Public Radio's (NPR) "All Things Considered". Norris also served as a correspondent for ABC News, where she won an Emmy Award and a Peabody Award for her coverage of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Norris was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 2, 2008, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2008_078
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Journalist and National Public Radio (NPR) host Michele Norris-Johnson (known as Michele Norris on NPR) was born on September 7, 1961, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Belvin and Elizabeth Norris. As a youth, Norris was encouraged by her parents to read the newspaper and watch the evening news. In 1979, she graduated from Minneapolis' Washburn High School where she participated in the InRoads Program.

Norris went on to enroll at the University of Wisconsin to pursue a career as an electrical engineer. After completing three and a half years, Norris was encouraged by a dean to take political science courses. In 1982, she transferred to the University of Minnesota and majored in journalism and mass communications. There, she also wrote stories for the *Minnesota Daily* and was later hired by WCCO-TV as a beat reporter.

Throughout the 1980s, Norris worked as a reporter for the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *L.A. Times*. During her stint with the *Washington Post*, Norris wrote a series about a six-year-old who was living in a crack house. The story was reprinted in a book entitled *Ourselves Among Others*. Then, in 1993, she was hired as a news correspondent for ABC News and as a contributing correspondent for the "Closer Look" segments on *World News Tonight* with Peter Jennings. While serving as a reporter for ABC, Norris received an Emmy Award and a Peabody Award for her contribution to the coverage of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

After working for ABC, in 2002, Norris was selected out of 100 candidates to be the host of *All Things Considered*, the nation's longest-running radio program on NPR. In this capacity, Norris became the first African American female host for NPR.

In 1990, Norris won the Livingston Award for young journalists. She is a four-time entrant for the Pulitzer Prize. In 2006, she received the University of Minnesota's Outstanding Achievement Award, and the National Association of Black Journalists' Salute to Excellence Award. In 2007, she received *Ebony* magazine's eighth

annual Outstanding Women in Marketing & Communications Award.

Norris lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband Broderick Johnson and their three children.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Michele Norris was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 2, 2008, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 2 Betacame SP videocassettes. Radio host and television news correspondent Michele Norris (1961 - ) was the host of National Public Radio's (NPR) "All Things Considered". Norris also served as a correspondent for ABC News, where she won an Emmy Award and a Peabody Award for her coverage of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

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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:

Norris, Michele

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Norris, Michele--Interviews

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African American women journalists--Interviews

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African American television journalists--Interviews

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Radio journalists--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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National Public Radio (U.S.)

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ABC News

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## **Occupations:**

Radio Host

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Television News Correspondent

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

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 Michele Norris, May 2, 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 6/7/2022 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 Michele Norris, Section A2008\_078\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:30  
2008/05/02

Michele Norris was born on September 7, 1961 in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Elizabeth Brown Norris and Belvin Norris, Jr. Her maternal great-grandparents had roots in Louisiana, and owned a barber shop in Alexandria, Minnesota. Her maternal grandfather, Jinx Brown, grew up in a stationary boxcar in Washington. He went on to work for the railroad, and once visited China with an exhibition baseball team. He married Norris' maternal grandmother, Ione Hopson Brown, who worked as a travelling saleswoman for the Aunt Jemima company; and settled in Minneapolis, where they raised Norris' mother. Norris' father was born to Fannie Walker Norris and Belvin Norris, Sr., and grew up in the Ensley neighborhood of Birmingham, Alabama, where he attended Industrial High School. In Minneapolis, both Norris' parents worked for the U.S. Post Office Department. They were the first black family to purchase a home on the city's south side, where they experienced discrimination from their white neighbors.

African American families.

Minneapolis (Minn.).

Prince.

Jemima, Aunt.

Civil rights demonstrations--Alabama--Birmingham--History--20th century.

A.H. Parker High School.

High school principals.

Video Oral History Interview with Michele Norris, Section A2008\_078\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:50  
2008/05/02

Michele Norris' father grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, and then enlisted in the U.S. Navy. After World War II, he joined his five brothers in Chicago, Illinois, where he obtained a position at the U.S. Post Office Department. After meeting Norris' mother, he moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Norris grew up. She admired her older sisters, Cindy McGraw and Marguerite McGraw; and spent the summers with her paternal relatives in Birmingham. Norris began her education at Minneapolis' Eugene Field Elementary School; and, after two years, transferred to the St. Joan of Arc Catholic Elementary School, where she became interested in literature. She was bused to Susan B. Anthony Junior High School, and then completed the ninth grade at the integrated Alexander Ramsey Junior High School. She went on to attend Washburn High School, where Principal Roland R. DeLapp mentored her during her parents' divorce. Norris also participated in the school's engineering program, and wrote for the student newspaper.

Interracial marriage.

Supreme Court decisions that changed the nation.

African American sisters.

African Americans--Civil rights--Alabama--Birmingham.

School integration--Minnesota--Minneapolis.

High school principals.