Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616
info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com

Creator: Thomas-Colas, Faithe A.

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas,

Dates: November 19, 2008

Bulk Dates: 2008

Physical Description: 10 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:57:18).

Abstract: Publisher Faithe A. Thomas-Colas (1961 - ) became publisher of the Milwaukee Courier in 2004. She has been a radio show panelist and television co-host, and became the Community Affairs Director of the Salvation Army, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Division, in November, 2007. Thomas-Colas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 19, 2008, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2008_136

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Publisher Faithe A. Thomas-Colas was born on June 22, 1961, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Helen McCray and Floyd Thomas. Colas graduated from John Marshall High School in 1979.

Thomas-Colas began her career at The Milwaukee Courier in the 1980s as a sales executive and later served as advertising manager, associate publisher, and editor. In 2004, Thomas-Colas was named publisher of The Milwaukee Courier. She has been a WMCS radio show panelist and has co-hosted What’s Going On? on MATA community television. Thomas-Colas was selected as the new co-host for Milwaukee Public Television’s Black Nouveau. Thomas-Colas became the community affairs director of the Salvation Army, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Division, in November of 2007.

Thomas-Colas has been the recipient of several community awards including the U.S. Postal Service's Women Putting Their Stamp on Metro Milwaukee 2002. In 2003, she received the Images of Us Sports Award recognizing women in journalism and the Andrew S. Douglas 2003-2004 Community Service Award. Thomas-Colas serves on the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund Corporate Advisory Board, and she is co-chair of the NAACP Environmental Justice Task Force. She is a member of the NAACP Executive Committee, a vice president of the Wisconsin Black Media Association, and active in several other community and professional organizations. Thomas-Colas is the president and a founding member of Dark Pearl Rising, an African American arts alliance comprised of Ko-Thi Dance Company, African American Children's Theatre, Hansberry Sands Theatre Company, City Ballet Theatre, Art In Motion, Milwaukee Dance Connection and My Window Productions. Colas is a member of The Publishers Group, which has created the internet site Bronzeville-Milwaukee.com to promote greater understanding of the history of Milwaukee’s Bronzeville. She is also the co-producer for a documentary on Milwaukee’s black factory workers, Punching In: A Tribute to the African American Factory Worker in Milwaukee.
Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas was conducted by Crowe, Larry on November 19, 2008, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was recorded on 10 Betacam SP videocassettes. Publisher Faithe A. Thomas-Colas (1961 - ) became publisher of the Milwaukee Courier in 2004. She has been a radio show panelist and television co-host, and became the Community Affairs Director of the Salvation Army, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Division, in November, 2007.

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:

Faithe A. Thomas-Colas
Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)
Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Faithe A. Thomas-Colas--Interviews
Publishers and publishing--Interviews
Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas

Newspaper employees--Wisconsin--Milwaukee--Interviews

African Americans in the newspaper industry--Wisconsin--Milwaukee--Interviews

African American women executives--Wisconsin--Milwaukee--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 7/3/2012 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, November 19, 2008
Faithe Thomas-Colas was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Helen McRay of Opa-Locka, Florida and Floyd Thomas, Sr. of Batesville, Mississippi on June 22, 1961. Both sides of Thomas-Colas’ family have histories of single motherhood. Helen and Floyd had children Faithe, Gina, Floyd, Jr. and Crystal but divorced after twenty-five years. Floyd remarried and had two additional children. A defining moment for Floyd happened when a furniture designer and manufacturer blindly approved him for a position following designs he submitted via post but refused to hire him once they met him; some months later Floyd saw his furniture in their storefront, which encouraged him to own and operate his own carpentry and home improvement businesses. Thomas-Colas’ mother Helen was a trailblazing black model with the Rosemary Bischoff agency. Helen works as a dining facility manager at an assisted living home in St. Louis, Missouri.

Discrimination in employment
Single mothers

The Thomas family lived a relatively affluent lifestyle on 25th and Center Street in a neighborhood undergoing white flight. Thomas-Colas felt safe there even when under curfew during the riots. She witnessed National Guard soldiers and tanks on Center Street. Thomas-Colas’ parents were politically aware and involved at the local level but especially in Thomas-Colas’ schooling where they fought the school’s attempt to track Thomas-Colas as mentally retarded based on testing. Thomas-Colas was among the first bussed students at 82nd Street School. She later enrolled in Catholic and Lutheran parochial schools. Thomas-Colas’ grandmother Lucille Berrien frequently ran for public office, including mayor, and was active in the black power movement where she worked with Michael McGee, Sr. and later his son.

Busing for school integration.
African American grandmothers.
Black power--United States.
Race riots--Wisconsin--Milwaukee.

Faithe Thomas-Colas met the famous Wisconsin jurist Vel Phillips when she was ten years old and learned black women could be judges. The recession in the 1970s caused Thomas-Colas to reenter public school John Marshall High School where students were more independent and casually dressed. Her grandmother Lucille Berrien was very active within the black power movement and inspired Thomas-Colas from a very young age. Thomas-Colas enjoyed reading everything she could but especially like biographies of American presidents. The gradual break up of her parents’ marriage distracted her in college as she worked to support her family.

Black power--United States.
African American grandmothers.
Recessions--United States.
Faithe Thomas-Colas married in 1982 and gave birth to Paige in 1984, the same year she divorced. She worked as a freelance public relations consultant for black businesses. While on business, she was discreetly interviewed by Gerald Jones of WNOV and Courier Communications. She worked in the radio and print divisions and worked her way up to publisher of the Milwaukee Courier. Police brutality and negligence concerning Ernest Lacy, Frank Jude, Jr., and Jeffrey Dahmer were popular subjects. The black media market in Milwaukee was saturated and suffered from poor sponsorship from local businesses that did not see themselves as members of the communities they serviced.

Dahmer, Jeffrey

Mass media--social aspects--United States.
Discrimination in law enforcement--United States.
Community development--Wisconsin--Milwaukee.

Video Oral History Interview with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas, Section A2008_136_ThomasColas_Faithe_06_MED_WEBCLIP001, TRT: 0:01:39 2008/11/19
Video Oral History Interview with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas, Section A2008_136_ThomasColas_Faithe_06_MED_WEBCLIP002, TRT: 0:02:12 2008/11/19
Video Oral History Interview with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas, Section A2008_136_ThomasColas_Faithe_06_MED_WEBCLIP003, TRT: 0:01:36 2008/11/19
Video Oral History Interview with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas, Section A2008_136_ThomasColas_Faithe_06_MED_WEBCLIP004, TRT: 0:02:12 2008/11/19
Video Oral History Interview with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas, Section A2008_136_ThomasColas_Faithe_06_MED_WEBCLIP005, TRT: 0:03:10 2008/11/19
Video Oral History Interview with Faithe A. Thomas-Colas, Section A2008_136_ThomasColas_Faithe_06_MED_WEBCLIP006, TRT: 0:03:36 2008/11/19