Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616
          info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator: Flake, Elaine
Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake,
Dates: April 27, 2010
Bulk Dates: 2010
Physical Description: 4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:57:58).
Abstract: Pastor Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake (1948 - ) is a pastor at the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral in New York City, a co-founder of the Allen Christian School, and the author of, "God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Hurting Women." Flake was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 27, 2010, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification: A2010_006
Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

A co-pastor at one of the largest churches in New York, Reverend Elaine Flake was born on July, 2, 1948 an only child to Leroy and Lorene McCollins in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1970, she graduated with her B.A. degree in English from Fisk University and went on to get her M.A. degree in English from Boston University. In 1993, Flake earned her Masters of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York. She was also awarded a D.D. degree from United Theological Seminary in Ohio where her husband, the Reverend Floyd Flake was an alumnus.

In 1976, Flake assumed a leadership role at The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York alongside her husband. Through their work, The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral became the 57th largest church in America and was featured nationally in media like Ebony Magazine and The History Channel. In 1983, she co-founded the Allen Christian School in Jamaica, NY, serving over 500 African American students. She went on to found the Allen Women’s Resource Center providing services to women and children who are victims of domestic abuse. The Center is also partnered with New York’s ‘Superwoman Program’ to help women find untraditional career fields. That same year Reverend Flake began the Allen Prison Ministry, the Allen Cancer Support Ministry, and the Allen HIV/AIDS Spiritual Support Ministry. These resources together made the Cathedral a central point in Queens, New York. For twenty-seven years, she has also hosted annual spiritual retreats/conferences for women. In 1999, she became the co-Pastor of the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York.

In the late 1990’s Flake contributed to publications about spirituality including the 'Women of Color Study Bible' compiled by World Bible Publishing and 'Souls of My Sisters: Black Women Break their Silence, Tell Their Stories, and Heal Their Spirits' edited by Dawn Marie Daniels and Candace Sandy. In 2003, Flake and her husband co-authored their own book 'Practical Virtues: Everyday Values and Devotions for African American Families Learning To Live With All Our Souls' filled with historical narratives related to spiritual values. Together they also wrote the 'African American Church Management Handbook' and in 2007, Flake alone wrote...
'God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Hurting Women'.

Flake lives in New York City with her husband Floyd and they have four adult children, Aliya, Nailah, Robert, and Harold.

Elaine Flake was interviewed by 'The HistoryMakers' on April 27, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 27, 2010, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. Pastor Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake (1948 - ) is a pastor at the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral in New York City, a co-founder of the Allen Christian School, and the author of, "God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing to Hurting Women."

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:

Flake, Elaine McCollins
Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)
Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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 Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake, April 27, 2010. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 1/21/2013 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, April 27, 2010

Video Oral History Interview with Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake, Section A2010_006_001_001, TRT: 0:29:45 2010/04/27

Margarett Elaine McCollins Flake slates her interview, lists her favorites, and delineates her family history. Flake’s mother, Lorene White, was the eighth child born in Water Valley, Mississippi, to Leonard and Addy White, and the
first in her family to graduate from college. White met Flake’s father, Leroy McCollins, at his restaurant in Memphis and she is their only child. Flake’s father was one of twelve children born in Oakland, Mississippi, to Davis and Mattie McCollins. Once he finished the eleventh grade, he joined the Navy. By the time Flake was born, he was a painter at an air force base in Memphis and her mother was a school teacher. Flake discusses her early memories at her grandmother’s house before discussing her memories of the Memphis bus and store boycotts of the 1950s.

Civil rights movements--Tennessee--Memphis.
African Americans--Mississippi--Social conditions.
African Americans--Tennessee--Social life and customs.
African Americans--Mississippi--History--20th century.
African Americans--Tennessee--History--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake, Section A2010_006_001_002, TRT: 0:28:48 2010/04/27

Elaine Flake discusses her experiences with the Civil Rights Movement in Memphis, her memories of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassinations, and her higher education. Memphis seemed a safer place to Flake than other areas of the South during the mid-twentieth century because everyone around her was dedicated to the advancement of people of color. Flake discusses Motown music in the 1950s and 1960s and recalls a few artists who attended her school including Carla Thomas. Flake recalls improvements in civil rights and desegregation efforts by the time she was in high school. She graduated high school in 1966 and majored in English at Fisk University until 1970 where she went on to Boston University to continue studying English until 1971. While she enjoyed Boston, Fisk recalls how racism was surprisingly more prevalent and visible than in Tennessee.

King, Martin Luther Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination.
African American musicians.
Civil rights movements--Tennessee--Memphis--History--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Rev. Dr. Elaine Flake, Section A2010_006_001_003, TRT: 0:30:23 2010/04/27

Elaine Flake continues discussing her memories of and her family’s reactions to President Kennedy’s assassination. She also continues describing her experiences at Boston University and her first teaching position in Newton, Massachusetts, from 1972 to 1976. Flake met her husband, Reverend Floyd Flake, at St. Paul AME Church in Cambridge in 1973. They were married in 1975. The Flakes moved to New York in 1976 so he could pastor The Greater Allen AME Cathedral of New York. By 1983, the Flakes had opened Allen Christian School where Mrs. Flake became the Educational Director. She then established the Allen Women’s Resource Center and began seminary. Flake attended Union Theological Seminary until 1993 and graduated from United Theological Seminary in 1997. Flake discusses sexism in the church and her efforts to support Reverend Vashti Murphy McKenzie to be elected as the first female bishop and discouragement she faced when deciding to pursue seminary.

African Methodist Episcopal Church.
Elaine Flake discusses her calling to the ministry, her theological education, progress and possibilities for the church, and her legacy. Flake describes her calling to the ministry as an evolution from the moment she saw her first female preacher to the time where she had been asked to speak so frequently that she decided to make it more official. She describes her perspective of seminary school including her surprise to discover that everyone in seminary does not believe in God. Flake discusses how the lessons of seminary influenced her work within her church as well as initiatives instituted by her and her husband at their church. Flake also discusses her hopes and fears for the African American community, what women bring to the ministry, and her legacy.

African American clergy.
African Methodist Episcopal Church--Education.