

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lauranita Dugas

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dugas, Lauranita, 1926-2015
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lauranita Dugas,
Dates:	May 28, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2010
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:34:19).
Abstract:	City education administrator and teacher Lauranita Dugas (1926 - 2015) was a former educational consultant for the Child Development Associate Training Project at Harold Washington College and teacher with the Chicago Child Care Society. Dugas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 28, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2010_032
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lifetime educator Lauranita Taylor Dugas was born on December 2, 1926 in Chicago, Illinois to Dorothy and Robert Taylor. Her father was the first black commissioner of the Chicago Housing Authority, an organization he worked with for eleven years. In 1944, Dugas graduated from Parker High School and moved to Wisconsin to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she received her B.A. degree in sociology. In 1949, Dugas married Lester J. Dugas Jr., an electrical engineering student at the time who then became the first black senior manager of Commonwealth Edison in Chicago. The two of them moved to Milwaukee where the Dugas' began a family.

In 1953, Dugas moved back to Chicago. With an interest in education, she began working for the Head Start Program. Three years later, Dugas moved to the State of Illinois' Institute for Juvenile Research and in 1974, she started working for the Chicago Child Care Society as a supervising teacher. Dugas remained with the Society for twenty-five years until her retirement in 1989. She then returned to the workforce as an educational consultant at Harold Washington College for their Child Development Associate Training Project, a position she held until 2007.

Dugas chaired the Jones-Swift Scholarship fund as part of the Chicago Metropolitan Association for the Education of Young Children, a sector of the national Association for the Education of Young Children. She was also a founding member of the Black Creativity Panel, an event hosted by the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. She was also a member of the Board of Advisors for the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. The board works to update the campus, with such projects as a new Early Childhood Development Center and renovation of the former Home Economics building. In 2009, the book *The Classrooms All Young Children Need: Lessons in Teaching from Vivian Paley* recognized her for her skillful teaching and support.

Dugas had three children, Gail D. Dugas, Jeffrey A. Dugas Sr., and Lauren Dugas Glover.

Luranita Dugas was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 28, 2010.

Dugas passed away on May 20, 2015.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Luranita Dugas was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 28, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. City education administrator and teacher Luranita Dugas (1926 - 2015) was a former educational consultant for the Child Development Associate Training Project at Harold Washington College and teacher with the Chicago Child Care Society.

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:

Dugas, Luranita, 1926-2015

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dugas, Luranita, 1926-2015 --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

City Education Administrator

Teacher

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Laurantita Dugas, May 28, 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 5/30/2023 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 Lauranita Dugas, Section A2010_032_001_001, TRT: 0:30:41 ?

Lauranita Dugas was born on December 2, 1926 in Chicago, Illinois to Dorothy Jennings Taylor and Robert Rochon Taylor. Her maternal great-grandmother, Ella Vaughn Smith, was the daughter of a white slave owner and a free African American woman in Louisville, Kentucky. Dugas' maternal grandmother, Laura Smith Jennings, moved to Chicago after the death of her husband, John Smith. Dugas' paternal ancestor, carpenter Henry Taylor, was enslaved by his father in North Carolina. Many years later, her paternal grandfather, Robert Robinson Taylor, became the first black graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and married Beatrice Rochon Taylor. He worked alongside his son, Dugas' father, as an architect and carpenter at the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. Dugas' father went on to study at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and met Dugas' mother when she was a student at the Chicago Teachers College. Upon graduation, Dugas' father obtained a position at Chicago's Binga State Bank.

Video Oral History Interview with Lauranita Dugas, Section A2010_032_001_002, TRT: 0:32:00 ?

Lauranita Dugas' father, Robert Rochon Taylor, built the historic Rosenwald Apartments on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois. He was recommended to philanthropist Julius Rosenwald by Director George Arthur of the Wabash Avenue YMCA. The building was modeled on European garden apartments, and housed middle income African Americans who were restricted by discriminatory housing covenants. Dugas grew up in the Rosenwald Apartments, where her father managed the building and served as the secretary and treasurer of the Illinois Federal Savings and Loan Association. He was the first African American to head the Chicago Housing Authority, and resigned in protest in 1950 after the city council impeded his attempts to build housing for low income African Americans. The Robert Taylor Homes were later named in his memory. Dugas also recalls an early experience of racial discrimination, when her pediatrician was forced to recruit a white colleague in order to admit her to an all-white hospital for a lifesaving operation.

Video Oral History Interview with Lauranita Dugas, Section A2010_032_001_003, TRT: 0:28:38 ?

Lauranita Dugas grew up in the Rosenwald Apartments in Chicago, Illinois. She attended nursery school in the building, and often spent time on 47th Street. Due to the influence of her father, architect Robert Rochon Taylor, Dugas attended the majority-white Lewis Champlin School in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, where she was encouraged by her teachers. During the Great Depression, her family never went hungry, although she and her sister, Barbara Bowman, often skipped lunch to save their money for White Castle sliders. Dugas went on to attend Englewood's Parker High School, where she was active in the glee club and honor society. Because the school prepared students to study at the Chicago Teachers College, it attracted African American students from throughout the city, who often used false addresses to enroll. Dugas also talks about the segregation of Chicago's black community on the South Side, and the discriminatory practices of majority retailers like Marshall Field and Company.

Video Oral History Interview with Lauranita Dugas, Section A2010_032_001_004, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Lauranita Dugas attended the integrated Parker High School in Chicago, Illinois; where, after the prom, she was barred from a club because of her race. Encouraged by her paternal uncle, Dugas matriculated at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. There, she discovered she had been poorly prepared in the Chicago Public Schools, and struggled academically. She often received assistance from friends who were graduates of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., including her roommate, future economist Mary

Burke Washington. After graduating in 1949, Dugas married Lester J. Dugas, Jr. They moved to Michigan, where he was promised a job at the AC Spark Plug Division; but, due to a recession, he struggled to find work. In 1953, Dugas returned with her husband to Chicago's Rosenwald Apartments, and he obtained a position at Commonwealth Edison while she raised their children. Three years later, Dugas' father, Robert Rochon Taylor, died after a series of heart attacks.

Video Oral History Interview with Lauranita Dugas, Section A2010_032_001_005, TRT: 0:31:27 ?

Lauranita Dugas began teaching at a Head Start program after her youngest daughter, Laura Dugas Glover, entered the third grade. In the mid-1960s, she joined the staff of the Center for Juvenile Research on Chicago's West Side, where she trained teachers, parents and social workers at the Henry Horner Homes. The center closed following the riots of 1968, and Dugas secured a position at the Chicago Child Care Society. In this part of the interview, Dugas talks about Chicago's Hyde Park-Kenwood neighborhood, where she moved with her family in 1960. The area was racially diverse, and included black and white residents, a large Jewish community and notable individuals like Elijah Muhammad, who moved to Kenwood in the late 1960s. Dugas was active in the Kenwood and Hyde Park block associations alongside community members like Professor Timuel Black and educator Albert Raby. She also talks about the changes in Hyde Park and Kenwood, including the urban renewal projects implemented by the University of Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Lauranita Dugas, Section A2010_032_001_006, TRT: 0:30:11 ?

Lauranita Dugas worked for twenty years at the Chicago Child Care Society (CCCS), where she helped integrate educational practices with childhood development research. She also assisted students with conditions like impaired hearing and autism. Upon retiring from CCCS in 1989, Dugas began training Head Start teachers at Harold Washington College. She also served on numerous civic committees in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, including the board of the Montgomery Place Retirement Community; and the board of Black Creativity, an annual exhibit about black scientists at the Museum of Science and Industry. There, she and her husband, Lester J. Dugas, Jr., served alongside notable community member Dorothy Runner. Dugas was also active with Working in the Schools and the St. Paul and the Redeemer Episcopal Church, and established a fund for minority students at her alma mater, the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dugas reflects upon her life, as well as her hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Lauranita Dugas, Section A2010_032_001_007, TRT: 0:32:52 ?

Lauranita Dugas talks about her family, including her late husband, Lester J. Dugas, Jr.; and her children, Gail Dugas, Jeffrey Dugas and Lauren Dugas. She reflects upon her family heritage, and how she would like to be remembered. She also talks about the politicians on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois. Dugas concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.