

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Patricia Russell-McCloud

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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>	Russell-McCloud, Patricia
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Patricia Russell-McCloud,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 20, 2011
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2011
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:28:26).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Motivational speaker and lawyer Patricia Russell-McCloud (1946 - ) was a Federal Communications Commission attorney, the president of The Links, Inc. and a motivational speaker. Russell-McCloud was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 20, 2011, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2011_028
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Motivational speaker Patricia Russell-McCloud was born on September 14, 1946, in Indianapolis, Indiana to Willie and Janiel Russell. The youngest of three daughters, Russell-McCloud delivered her first major speech at the age of eight, before the convention of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church convention in Los Angeles. In 1964, Russell-McCloud graduated from Shortridge High School in Indianapolis and went on to receive her B.A. degree in history in 1968 from Kentucky State University in Frankfort, Kentucky. In 1970, she enrolled at the Howard University School of Law and received her J.D. degree in 1973.

In 1973, Russell-McCloud began working for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in Washington D.C and by 1974, she was involved in a recommendation to the U.S. Department of Justice that eventually led to the Supreme Court case *United States vs. AT&T*, which broke up what was then the largest monopoly in the United States. Russell-McCloud received several promotions, eventually becoming the head of the Complaints Branch within the Broadcast Division of the FCC. In 1982, she met E. Earl McCloud, a minister and military science instructor at Alabama A&M University and they married in 1983. That same year, she left the FCC to begin her own motivational speaking business, Russell-McCloud Associates.

Over the past 27 years, Russell-McCloud has become one of the most sought-after motivational speakers in the nation. Her clients include McDonalds, the United States Navy, Coca-Cola, United Auto Workers and a host of other prominent companies. Black Enterprise Magazine named her the fifth best motivational speaker in 1998. From 1994 to 1998, Russell-McCloud served as president of the Links, Inc. Her book, *A is for Attitude: An Alphabet for Living* was published in 1999, and she has released an audio CD of her speeches entitled *Never Give Up* and a separate recording of her speech *The Power of Connecting*. Russell-McCloud has received numerous honors, including the keys to more than 300 cities.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Patricia Russell-McCloud was conducted by Denise Gines on April 20, 2011, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Motivational speaker and lawyer Patricia Russell-McCloud (1946 - ) was a Federal Communications Commission attorney, the president of The Links, Inc. and a motivational speaker.

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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:**

Russell-McCloud, Patricia

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Russell-McCloud, Patricia--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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## Occupations:

Lawyer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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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 Patricia Russell-McCloud, April 20, 2011. 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).

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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 Patricia Russell-McCloud, Section A2011\_028\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:02 2011/04/20

Patricia Russell-McCloud was born on September 14, 1946 in Indianapolis, Indiana to Jannie Burrus Russell and Willie Russell. Both her maternal grandparents, Mary Slaughter Burrus and William Burrus, Jr., and paternal grandparents, Verdie Watkins Russell and George Russell, worked as sharecroppers in Kentucky. After marrying, Russell-McCloud's parents migrated to Indianapolis alongside many of their siblings. Her father received a limited schooling in Kentucky, and worked as a custodian in Indianapolis; while her mother, who emphasized the importance of hard work and education, held several positions as a matron in Indianapolis' private homes and public schools. They raised three daughters in the Haughville section of Indianapolis, where Russell-McCloud began her education at the integrated Woodrow Wilson School No. 75. She enjoyed her English courses, and began speaking publically at the age of eight years old, when she became a lector at her family's church and began participating in debate competitions.

Video Oral History Interview with Patricia Russell-McCloud, Section A2011\_028\_001\_002, TRT: 2:27:22 2011/04/20

Patricia Russell-McCloud had her first major public speaking engagement in 1953, when she delivered the welcome address for the national meeting of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Zion church in Los Angeles, California. She belonged to an A.M.E. Zion congregation in Indianapolis, Indiana, where she attended the Woodrow Wilson School No. 75 and Short Ridge High School. Although both schools were integrated prior to the desegregation of schools in 1954, the City of Indianapolis remained segregated throughout Russell-McCloud's childhood, and she was aware of little civil rights activity in the city. After graduating from high school, Russell-McCloud matriculated at Kentucky State College in Frankfort, Kentucky, where she majored in history and

political science. She joined the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority during her sophomore year; and, as the only member of her pledge class, was required to perform solo during her initiation show. She also participated in the school's traveling and concert choirs.

Video Oral History Interview with Patricia Russell-McCloud, Section A2011\_028\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:56 2011/04/20

Patricia Russell-McCloud joined the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority at Kentucky State College in Frankfort, Kentucky. After graduating, she completed a summer program at the Harvard Law School through the Council on Legal Education Opportunity. She disliked her experiences at Harvard University, and decided to teach for two years at Arsenal Technical High School in Detroit, Michigan and Foch Junior High School in Indianapolis, Indiana. Then, Russell-McCloud enrolled at the Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. After earning a law degree, she was recommended by Dean Herbert O. Reid, Sr. to join the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) under Reverend Benjamin Hooks, who was the FCC's first black commissioner. Russell-McCloud worked at the FCC for ten years, during which she organized a conference for black broadcasters, and witnessed the start of the twenty-four hour news cycle. She eventually became the commission's chief of complaints, and retired after clearing a backlog of 11,000 cases.

Video Oral History Interview with Patricia Russell-McCloud, Section A2011\_028\_001\_004, TRT: 4:26:54 2011/04/20

Patricia Russell-McCloud joined The Links during her time at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in Washington, D.C. She became the organization's national parliamentarian shortly being recruited as a member; and, from 1994 to 1998, served as the organization's national president. In this role, Russell-McCloud hosted The Links' fiftieth anniversary celebration in New Orleans, Louisiana, and sponsored the Boys Choir of Harlem's performance at The Links' convention. She also instituted an award that was named in honor of sculptor Elizabeth Catlett, digitized the organization's registration process and developed a new

focus on educational service. In 1983, Russell-McCloud left the FCC to join her husband, E. Earl McCloud, Jr., in San Antonio, Texas, where he was serving as a chaplain in the U.S. Army. Russell-McCloud decided to become a motivational speaker, and her husband went on to be appointed as the bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal church's Fifteenth Episcopal District in southern Africa.

Video Oral History Interview with Patricia Russell-McCloud, Section A2011\_028\_001\_005, TRT: 5:25:23 2011/04/20

Patricia Russell-McCloud began her career as a professional motivational speaker in San Antonio, Texas. Because of her previous work with the Federal Communications Commission, she secured her early engagements with government agencies and telecommunications firms. She also delivered the commencement address at Howard University, where she earned her law degree. Russell-McCloud went on to publish 'A Is for Attitude: An Alphabet for Living,' a motivational book based on her speeches; and 'Keep Rising,' a play that was performed at the Year of the Woman celebration in her hometown of Indianapolis, Indiana. She also released a CD of motivational speeches entitled 'Never Give Up.' Russell-McCloud received the keys to three hundred cities, and was honored by The Links and magazines like Women and Wealth and Women on the Move. She also served as a first lady of the African Methodist Episcopalian church, where her husband, E. Earl McCloud, Jr., was a bishop.

Video Oral History Interview with Patricia Russell-McCloud, Section A2011\_028\_001\_006, TRT: 6:10:49 2011/04/20

Patricia Russell-McCloud narrates her photographs.