

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Fern Hunt

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hunt, Fern, 1948-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Fern Hunt,
Dates:	September 14, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:57:26).
Abstract:	Mathematician Fern Hunt (1948 -) served as an associate mathematics professor at Howard University and is a top research mathematician at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Hunt was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 14, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_223
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Mathematician Fern Y. Hunt was born on January 14, 1948 in New York City to Daphne Lindsay and Thomas Edward Hunt. Her mother was a transcribing typist who attended Hunter College for two years, and her father worked as a mail handler. Hunt's grandparents immigrated to the United States from Jamaica prior to World War I. At age nine, Hunt received a chemistry set for Christmas, sparking an early interest in science. Hunt's ninth grade science teacher, Charles Wilson, further fostered her interest in science by introducing her to the Saturday Science Program at Columbia University and encouraging her to apply to the Bronx High School of Science. After graduating from high school, Hunt attended Bryn Mawr College at the encouragement of her mother, where she earned her A.B. degree in mathematics in 1969. Hunt then entered New York University's Courant Institute of Mathematics where she earned her M.S. degree and later her Ph.D. degree in mathematics in 1978.

Hunt started work in academia, first at the University of Utah. She later accepted a position with Howard University's Mathematics Department as an associate professor in 1978. From 1981 to 1982, Hunt worked in the mathematical biology laboratory at the National Institute of Health (NIH). From 1988 to 1991, Hunt also served as a member of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Mathematical Advisory Board with the Education Testing Service. In 1993, Hunt decided to leave Howard University to start her career with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in the computing and applied mathematics laboratory.

Hunt's research interests are focused on applied probability and dynamical systems, which are mathematical models that describe different kinds of movement. In addition to mathematical modeling, Hunt has also conducted research in biomathematics to look at genetic variation and patterns in bacteria. Throughout her career, Hunt has written several scientific articles. In addition to her work at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Hunt is active in the scientific and local communities. She is involved with several professional mathematical societies and has served as a consultant for organizations like the National Bureau of Standards and the U.S. Department of Energy. In 2000, Hunt was honored with the prestigious Arthur S. Flemming Award for

Outstanding Federal Service for her contributions to mathematical biology, computational geometry, nonlinear dynamics, and more. Fern Hunt works in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Fern Y. Hunt was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 14, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Fern Hunt was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 14, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Mathematician Fern Hunt (1948 -) served as an associate mathematics professor at Howard University and is a top research mathematician at the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

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:

Hunt, Fern, 1948-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hunt, Fern, 1948- --Interviews

African American mathematicians--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Howard University; Institute for Materials Research (U.S.). Analytical Chemistry Division

Occupations:

Mathematician

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 Fern Hunt, September 14, 2012. 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 Fern Hunt, Section A2012_223_001_001, TRT: 1:29:08 ?

Fern Hunt talks about her family background. Her mother, Daphne Lindsay, was born in May of 1918 in New York City, New York. While her family migrated from Jamaica and the West Indies, she was born and raised in Harlem. After graduating from Whatley High School in 1936, she attended Hunter College for two years before her lack of funding precluded her continuing her studies. She played the piano and composed music with musician, William Warfield. Hunt's father, Thomas Edward Hunt, was born on June in 1916 in New York City. His parents were from a British Caribbean island.

African American families--New York (State)--New York.

African American mothers--New York (State)--New York.

Harlem (New York, N.Y.)--Social life and customs.

Hunter College.

Warfield, William.

Music--Study and teaching.

Video Oral History Interview with Fern Hunt, Section A2012_223_001_002, TRT: 2:30:19 ?

Fern Hunt talks about her father's family background. Her paternal grandparents were Caribbean immigrants and struggled upon their arrival to the U.S. Her grandmother, Henrietta Hunt, was murdered during World War II. Hunt's father, Thomas Edward Hunt, grew up in New York. He was drafted to serve in the U.S. Army during World War II and returned in 1946. Hunt talks about how her father's experience in the Army affected his temperament and his relationship with his wife, Daphne Lindsay. Hunt also describes her parents' personalities and remembers her earliest childhood memories.

African American fathers--New York (State)--New York.

Caribbean Americans.

United States. Army.

World War, 1939-1945.

Childhood--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Fern Hunt, Section A2012_223_001_003, TRT: 3:29:09 ?

Fern Hunt grew up in the Amsterdam Houses projects of New York, which she describes along with her growing up there and her experience being bullied by the neighborhood kids for being dark skinned. The bullying subsided as she grew older and more confident with her appearance. Hunt attended P.S. 141 and P.S. 191 for elementary school. She struggled initially, but had improved by the third grade, when she transferred to P.S. 191. Her favorite subjects were geography and science. As a child, she received the Gilbert Chemistry Set for Christmas, which fueled her interest in chemistry. Hunt then went on to attend LaSalle Junior High School in Manhattan. While there, she was involved in the science club and participated in science fairs. Her first science project was on paper chromatography, which earned her a prize for third place. Towards the end of her junior high school years, her interests began to shift towards mathematics.

Childhood--New York (State)--New York.

Bullying.

Education--New York (State)--New York.

Chemistry sets.

Science projects.

Video Oral History Interview with Fern Hunt, Section A2012_223_001_004, TRT: 4:29:33 ?

Fern Hunt entered the Bronx High School of Science in 1962. She disliked her overall experience, which was caused by an unbalanced socioeconomic demographic and gender ratio. She also did not have a social life during her high school years. Hunt's interest in academics was her priority. She became discontent with chemistry and chose to develop her interest in mathematics and began independently reading books on the subject. She appreciated the logical nature of mathematics, as opposed to the arbitrary nature of chemistry. Hunt talks about her memories of the Civil Rights Movement. She was in high school at the time of President John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963, as well as Malcolm X's assassination in 1965.

Education, Secondary--New York (State)--New York.

Mathematics.

Civil rights movements--United States.

Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963--Assassination.

King, Martin Luther Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination.

X, Malcolm, 1925-1965--Assassination.

Video Oral History Interview with Fern Hunt, Section A2012_223_001_005, TRT: 5:30:08 ?

Fern Hunt graduated in the top third of her class from the Bronx High School of Science in 1965. She attributes her class standing and mediocre study habits to her love for television, movies and music. She loved movies of the 1930s and 1940s and enjoyed Brazilian music. The United Negro College Fund introduced Hunt to Bryn Mawr College, where she ultimately decided to attend and pursued a degree in mathematics. Hunt recalls initially having difficulty adjusting to the small size and the rigorous curriculum of Bryn Mawr. However, she eventually acclimated herself to the environment and did well in her studies. While there, she became involved with the Black Student Society, the math club, and in theatre. After graduating in 1969 with her A.B. degree in mathematics, Hunt attended the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences at New York University.

Education, Secondary--New York (State)--New York.

United Negro College Fund.

Bryn Mawr College.

Mathematics.

New York University.

Video Oral History Interview with Fern Hunt, Section A2012_223_001_006, TRT: 6:29:09 ?

Fern Hunt began her graduate studies at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences at New York University in 1969. While there, she held a fellowship that paid for her educational expenses. However, she lost her fellowship after receiving a B on her qualifying examination. Taking a break from school, she taught at the City College of New York. Hunt returned to the Courant Institute a year later on a Martin Luther King Scholarship that paid for her educational expenses and received her Ph.D. degree in 1978. Her dissertation, titled "Genetic and Spatial Variation in some Selection-Migration Models," explored the genetic evolution of animals and plants that migrate by looking at their reproduction patterns. Hunt's work has had practical applications in biology and computer graphics, which earned her the Arthur Fleming Award for Outstanding Federal Service in 2001. She held teaching appointments at the University of Utah and Howard University in the department of mathematics.

New York University.

Mathematics.

City University of New York.

Genetics.

University of Utah.

Howard University.