

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jones, Michele, 1963-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones,
Dates:	January 14, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:01:20).
Abstract:	Noncommissioned officer Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones (1963 -) the 9th Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Reserve, was appointed under the Obama Administration as the Director of External Veterans/Military Affairs and Community Outreach in 2012. Jones was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 14, 2013, in Arlington, Virginia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_016
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Army Noncommissioned Officer Michele S. Jones was born on November 24, 1963 in Baltimore, Maryland. She spent her childhood in the the Baltimore area, and graduated from Milford Mill High School. Upon graduation, Jones enrolled at Howard University but then transferred to Fayetteville State University, where she received her B.S. degree in business administration in 1994.

Jones enlisted in the United States Army in September 1982, and later became the first female selected class president of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. Throughout her military career, Jones has served in many positions of leadership, including squad leader, section leader, platoon sergeant and first sergeant. Additionally, she was involved in every major contingency operation involving U.S. Armed Forces: Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Restore Hope, Provide Comfort, Joint Endeavor, Nobel Eagle, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. In 2002, Jones became the first female appointed as the 9th Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Reserve. In 2007, she retired after twenty-five years of service in both the active and reserve component.

Upon retirement, Jones continued to serve the youth and elderly as a motivational speaker for the civilian community. Through the Army's Planning For life Program, Jones has given lectures and speeches to over forty-five thousand middle and high school students in the U.S. and abroad. In 2009, she was appointed under the administration of President Barack Obama as special assistant to the Secretary of Defense White House Liaison. Jones has also held positions as the special assistant and senior advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense, the principal deputy to the Under Secretary of Defense, and as the director of External Veterans/Military Affairs and Community Outreach.

Jones is the recipient of several military awards, including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Parachutist Badge, the German Army Forces Airborne Wings and the Royal Thai Airborne Wings. In 2005,

she received the Meritorious Service Award from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In 2009, she received the Spirit of Democracy Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation as well as the Freedom's Sister Award from the Ford Foundation. The National Congress of Black Women honored Jones in 2011 with the Shirley Chisholm Trailblazer Award.

Michele S. Jones was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 14, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 14, 2013, in Arlington, Virginia, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Noncommissioned officer Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones (1963 -) the 9th Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Reserve, was appointed under the Obama Administration as the Director of External Veterans/Military Affairs and Community Outreach in 2012.

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:

Jones, Michele, 1963-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jones, Michele, 1963- --Interviews

United States--Armed Forces--African American Officers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Noncommissioned Officer

HistoryMakers® Category:

MilitaryMakers

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 Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, January 14, 2013. 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 Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, Section A2013_016_001_001, TRT: 1:29:23 ?

Michele Jones describes her family's history. Jones' mother, Doris Herndon Jones, was born in New York City in January of 1939. Her family then moved to Baltimore, Maryland, where she graduated from Frederick Douglass High School. Doris Jones worked for the railroad system in Baltimore, and attended Morgan State University after she was married with children. She then went on to earn a master's degree in business administration (MBA). Jones' father, Leon Jones, was born in January of 1940 in Durham, North Carolina. Although he was raised in North Carolina, he attended high school in Baltimore, where he was involved in the drama club and in sports. Jones shares the details of her ancestry, and talks about her great grandparents and her grandparents on each side.

African American families.

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

African American fathers--North Carolina.

African American grandparents.

Morgan State University.

Video Oral History Interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, Section A2013_016_001_002, TRT: 2:28:54 ?

Michele Jones was raised in Baltimore, Maryland, where she attended Woodmore Elementary School and Milford Mill High School. She talks about her interest in history, archeology and English, attending charm school as a child, and her exposure to dance and music. Jones' parents met in high school in Baltimore in 1958 and married in 1960. Her father also served in the U.S. Army for six years, attaining the rank of staff sergeant. Jones describes her close-knit family, her memories of growing up in Baltimore, her parents' personalities and who she takes after. She also talks about her exposure to religion as a child and her freedom to choose her faith.

Childhood--Maryland--Baltimore.

Education--Maryland--Baltimore.

African American fathers.

African American mothers.

Religion.

Video Oral History Interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, Section A2013_016_001_003, TRT: 3:34:17 ?

Michele Jones attended Milford Mill High School in Baltimore, Maryland, where she played softball and was a cheerleader. She describes her experience in school, talks about her teachers and her grades, and recalls attending her school prom as a freshman and as a senior. Inspired by a U.S. Army commercial that motivated her to "be all you can be," Jones decided to join the Army in 1982, after graduating from high school. She recalls her parents' reaction to her decision and their support of her choices. Jones also describes her experience at basic training and later at advanced training at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indiana.

Education, Secondary--Maryland.

Mentoring in education--Maryland.

United States. Army.

Fort Harrison (Ind.)

Video Oral History Interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, Section A2013_016_001_004, TRT: 4:29:07 ?

In 1983, after completing the Advanced Individual Training test, Michele Jones was appointed to her first assignment on the U.S. Army installation at Fort Carson, Colorado. She describes her experience there. In 1984, she went on her first overseas assignment to Hanau, Germany, where she worked in the rank of specialist promotable (E4 promotable). In 1985, Jones left the active component of the Army and entered the reserve forces in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1988, she went to Honduras and Panama, and returned to the U.S. to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, around 1989. While there, Jones enrolled in Fayetteville State University, where she earned her B.S. degree in business administration. Jones describes her experience in college. She also talks about being a cheerleader for the Baltimore Colts while she was in high school, her experience while auditioning for the position, and the relocation of the Colts to Indianapolis in 1983.

Fort Carson (Co.)

United States. Army. European Command.

Fort Bragg (N.C.)

Fayetteville State University.

Baltimore Colts (Football team)

Video Oral History Interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, Section A2013_016_001_005, TRT: 5:29:03 ?

In 1997, Michele Jones was selected to attend the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, and was promoted to the rank of a sergeant major in the Army. After completing nine months of training, she was first assigned as an instructor at the Academy, and then to the 78th Infantry Division in Edison, New Jersey, where she was selected as a command sergeant major. Jones explains the responsibilities of a sergeant major and a command sergeant major in the Army, describes her experience at the Sergeants Major Academy, and talks about her class' involvement in community activities while there. In 2001, Jones planned to retire from the Army after twenty years of service, but postponed her retirement in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. She recalls 9/11, as well as the death of her childhood friend, Davin Green, in the Beirut barracks bombing of 1983. In 2002, Jones was selected as command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Reserve.

Fort Bliss (Tex.).

US Army Sergeants Major Academy.

United States. Army--African American officers.

September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001.

Death.

Video Oral History Interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, Section A2013_016_001_006, TRT: 6:34:16 ?

In 2002, Michelle Jones was selected as the command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Reserve, becoming the first woman and the third African American to serve in the position. Jones describes her role and experience as the command sergeant major of the Army Reserve, talks about educating the media about the Reserve, and discusses the challenges of the Reserve in staying equipped and trained for their role in the modern-day global war on terror. She also talks about her role during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and HistoryMaker, Lieutenant

General Russel L. Honore's coordination of military relief efforts. Jones retired from the U.S. Army in 2007, after twenty-five of service. She then founded The Bones Theory Group, LLC, which offers consulting services that also focus on tutoring private sector businesses in recruiting and retaining veterans. Jones was invited to the 2008 Democratic National Convention as a surrogate speaker for presidential nominee Senator Barack Obama. She describes her experience there.

United States. Army Reserve.

United States. Army--African American officers.

Terrorism--Prevention--United States.

Hurricane Katrina, 2005.

Honore, Russel L.

African American business consultants.

Video Oral History Interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, Section A2013_016_001_007, TRT: 7:28:32 ?

Michelle Jones served in President Barack Obama's administration in several capacities from 2009 to 2012. In 2009, she was appointed as the special assistant to the Secretary of Defense and White House Liaison. From December, 2010 to December, 2011, she served as the special assistant and senior advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, HistoryMaker Clifford Stanley, and his principal deputy. In 2012, she was appointed as the director of External Veterans/Military Affairs and Community Outreach. In this section of the interview, Jones describes her service and responsibilities in the Obama administration. She left the administration in December of 2012, to re-launch her consulting firm, The Bones Theory, LLC. Jones discusses her goals for her firm. She also describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflects upon her career choices and legacy.

Obama, Barack.

United States.--Department of Defense.

African American business consultants.

Veterans--Services for--United States.

Reminiscing.

Video Oral History Interview with Sgt. Maj. Michele Jones, Section A2013_016_001_008, TRT: 8:27:48 ?

In this section of the interview, Michele Jones talks about her daughters, and her parents' unconditional love and support of her choices. She also acknowledges the support that she has received from her friend, Janet Miller. Jones closes the interview by sharing how she would like to be remembered and describing her photographs.

African American families.

Reminiscing.

Photographs.