

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Pamela Gunter-Smith

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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>	Gunter-Smith, Pamela
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 11, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 MOV HD video files (3:18:57).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Physiologist and university president Pamela Gunter-Smith (1951 - ) former director of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Biomedical Program and the Center for Biomedical and Behavioral Research at Spelman College, is the first provost and academic vice president at Drew University. Gunter-Smith was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 11, 2013, in Madison, New Jersey. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_062
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Provost and Academic Vice President Pamela J. Gunter-Smith earned her B.S. degree in biology from Spelman College in 1973 and her Ph.D. degree in physiology from Emory University in 1978. She conducted post-doctoral research at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the University of Texas-Houston Medical School. Gunter-Smith has also participated in professional development opportunities, such as the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) Leadership Development Program and the American Council on Education (ACE) Fellowship at the University of Miami.

In 1981, Gunter-Smith began working as a project manager and research physiologist at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) where she supervised three independent laboratories and oversaw an independent research program to assess and mitigate the effects of radiation on intestinal physiology. From 1982 to 1992, Gunter-Smith held faculty appointments at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and George Washington University. In 1992, Gunter-Smith was appointed Porter Professor of Physiology and chair of the biology department at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. During her tenure, she served as the associate provost for science and mathematics, directed Spelman's Howard Hughes Medical Institute Biomedical Program and the Center for Biomedical and Behavioral Research, improved the curriculum in the natural sciences, facilitated the development of grants for the natural and social sciences and was instrumental in providing a number of opportunities for the faculty and students. While at Spelman, she played a major role in fund-raising and developing institutional grants from private foundations and federal agencies.

In 2006, she joined Drew University as its first provost and academic vice president. As the chief academic officer, she helped to develop and implement a new vision statement to strengthen the natural science departments. Gunter-Smith has been instrumental in developing Drew's strategic plan, strengthening enrollments and retention, and developing new graduate programs. Gunter-Smith has written numerous peer-reviewed articles

on the subject of intestinal physiology and served a number of panels for the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. She also served on the Board of Directors of the William Townsend Porter Foundation and the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS).

For her efforts and research at the AFRRI, Gunter-Smith was appointed the US representative to the NATO working group on radiation-induced gastrointestinal injury and received the Director's Award for Distinguished Service in 1992. In 2001, she received the Spelman Presidential Faculty Award for Scholarly Achievement. She received the Spelman College Alumnae Achievement Award in Health and Science in 2005.

Pamela J. Gunter-Smith was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 11, 2013.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 11, 2013, in Madison, New Jersey, and was recorded on 7 MOV HD video files. Physiologist and university president Pamela Gunter-Smith (1951 - ) former director of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Biomedical Program and the Center for Biomedical and Behavioral Research at Spelman College, is the first provost and academic vice president at Drew University.

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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:

Gunter-Smith, Pamela

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Gunter-Smith, Pamela--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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## HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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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 Pamela Gunter-Smith, March 11, 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 7/30/2013 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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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, March 11, 2013**

Video Oral History Interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith, Section A2013\_062\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:23 2013/03/11

Pamela Gunter-Smith talks about her family background. Her mother, Pearl Jeanne Kennedy, was born in January of 1931 in Marianna, Arkansas. She grew up on her family's farm, now known as the Kennedy Farm, which is still in existence today. She studied dance at Fisk University and worked as a P.E. instructor for a while before continuing her graduate studies. She received her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in education from Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee, respectively. Gunter-Smith's father, Marcus Hutto Beanard Gunter, was born in January of 1918 in Nashville, Tennessee. His father founded a funeral home called William Gunter & Sons that served black middle class families in Nashville. He studied music at the Tuskegee Institute, The Julliard School of Performing Arts, and the University of Chicago. He later became a music teacher at what is currently known as Martin Luther King Jr. Magnet School.

African American families--Southern States.

Family farms--Arkansas.

Fisk University--Alumni and alumnae.

African American business enterprises--Funeral homes.

African American music teachers.

Video Oral History Interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith, Section A2013\_062\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:40 2013/03/11

Pamela Gunter-Smith was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee. She talks about her childhood memories, her childhood neighborhoods, and about being raised shielded from the racial burdens that were characteristic of the South. She lived in an African American middle class community and grew up around her family's funeral home business, which was also where she received her first anatomy lessons. Education was especially important in Gunter-Smith's household during her growing up. She attended St. Vincent School, a small private Catholic school, for her elementary education. Her favorite subjects were science and language and she played the violin and piano.

Childhood--Tennessee--Nashville.

Middle class African Americans--Tennessee--Nashville.

Children and death.

Catholic schools--Tennessee.

Violin and piano music--Instruction and study.

Video Oral History Interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith, Section A2013\_062\_001\_003, TRT: 3:30:52 2013/03/11

Pamela Gunter-Smith was an only child and was often around accomplished adults during her childhood. Her parents were friends of Vivien Thomas, Zephaniah Alexander Looby, and Bill Dawson. Gunter-Smith attended high school at St. Bernard Academy, where she received a rich education in the sciences. From an early age, she aspired to become a scientist. After graduating high school, she decided to attend Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, due to its proximity to Morehouse College, and her positive impression of the biology department. She talks about her experience at Spelman, as well as her mentors, Dr. Audrey Forbes Manley, Dr. Clinton Warner, Jr., and Dr. William LeFlore.

African American intellectuals.

Spelman College--Alumni and alumnae.

Spelman College--Faculty.

Mentoring in education--Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith, Section A2013\_062\_001\_004, TRT: 4:30:18 2013/03/11

Pamela Gunter-Smith attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. During the summer before her senior year, she interned at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory. After receiving her B.S. degree in biology in 1973, she began her graduate studies towards her Ph.D. degree at Emory University. Under the tutelage of John White, Gunter-Smith's dissertation, entitled "The Effect of Theophylline on Amphiuma Small Intestine," was essentially focused on the development of diarrheal diseases. She received her Ph.D. degree in physiology in 1978 and subsequently held post-doctoral appointments at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the University of Texas Health Science Center. She talks about her experiences there, as well as her decision to join the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI). Marine Biological Laboratory (Woods Hole, Mass.)

Emory University--Doctoral students.

Humans--Gastrointestinal tract--Diseases--Research.

Universities and colleges--Faculty.

Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (U.S.).

Video Oral History Interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith, Section A2013\_062\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:46 2013/03/11

Pamela Gunter-Smith began her professional career at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) in Bethesda, Maryland in 1981. She began as a research scientist and was later promoted to the role of project manager. In this role, Gunter-Smith managed three research laboratories and was responsible for fundraising. Concurrently, she maintained visiting teaching appointments at the George Washington University School of Medicine, the Uniformed Services University, and Spelman College. In 1992, she received the Director's Award for Distinguished Service from the AFRRI. That same year, she was appointed as the Porter Professor of Physiology and chair of the department of biology at her alma matter, Spelman College. Gunter-Smith talks about her career and work at Spelman, her professional activities and awards, the funding challenges for HBCUs in Atlanta, and how she balances her professional life with her personal life.

Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (U.S.)--Employees.

Universities and colleges--Visiting teachers.

Spelman College--Curricula.

African American universities and colleges--Finance.

Work-life balance.

Video Oral History Interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith, Section A2013\_062\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:33 2013/03/11

Pamela Gunter-Smith served in several leadership positions at Spelman College during her fourteen-year tenure. In 2005, she received the Spelman College Alumnae Achievement Award. At this time, Gunter-Smith was in the process of seeking out positions where she could have a greater impact in higher education administration. In 2006, she was appointed as provost and academic vice president of Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. One of her major accomplishments at Drew has been the facilitation of diversifying the student body and the faculty. She is also passionate about seeing women advance in higher education administration and serves on the Board of Directors of the

HERS Group and the William Townsend Porter Foundation. Gunter-Smith talks about her goals for Drew University as well as her future professional aspirations. She also shares her hopes and concerns for the African American community, reflects upon her legacy, and talks about her family.

Spelman College--Administration.

Alumni and alumnae--Awards.

Drew University--Administration.

Diversity in higher education.

Women college administrators--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Pamela Gunter-Smith, Section A2013\_062\_001\_007, TRT: 7:20:25 2013/03/11

Pamela Gunter-Smith talks about how she would like to be remembered and describes her photographs.

Photograph collections.