

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Almeta Cooper

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cooper, Almeta
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper,
Dates:	August 18, 2018 and May 10, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013 and 2018
Physical Description:	16 uncompressed MOV digital video files (7:32:47).
Abstract:	General counsel Almeta Cooper (1950 -) was senior vice president of health services and general counsel for The Ohio State University Medical Center. Cooper was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 18, 2018 and May 10, 2013, in Columbus, Ohio and Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_163
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

General counsel Almeta Cooper was born in 1950 to her mother Patricia Carter Cooper and her father. She attended Wells College in Aurora, New York, graduating with her B.A. degree in 1972. She then attended Northwestern University School of Law in Evanston, Illinois earning her J.D. degree from there in 1975.

Cooper went on to pursue a career in health law. She began her work as assistant director of health law at the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1977. She

then worked as legal counsel for Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee in 1982, MCP Hahnemann University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the mid-1980s, and the Ohio State Medical Association in Columbus, Ohio in 1999. In the early 2000s, Cooper became Associate Vice President for Health Sciences and Associate General Counsel for Health Sciences at The Ohio State University Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio. In 2014, she became the senior vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary for Morehouse School of Medicine. She has been very involved in the American Health Lawyers Association (AHLA) since 1980, serving as the first African American woman president of the organization in 2003 among many other leadership roles. In 2012, Cooper was named a fellow of the AHLA in order to continue her contribution to the association. She is also an active member of the American Bar Association (ABA) and sits on a program committee for the Physician Legal Issues Conference and chairs the Public Health and Policy Interest Group. Cooper lectures regularly at law education conferences and other professional gatherings on topics such as “Medical Staff: The Fault Line between Physicians and Hospitals” and “How to Stay Focused on a Health Law Career.” Cooper was honored as a Mentor by the 2011 Top Corporate Counsel awards from *Columbus Business First*.

In addition to her health law career, Cooper was involved in numerous groups and organizations, including serving as president of the Central Ohio Links Inc. Chapter. She is also involved with Columbus Reads, the Women’s Fund of Central Ohio, and the YWCA Family Center. She was awarded the YWCA Woman of Achievement Award in 2009 to honor her commitment to her community.

Almeta Cooper was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 10, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Almeta Cooper was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson and Larry Crowe on August 18, 2018 and May 10, 2013, in Columbus, Ohio and Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 16 uncompressed MOV digital video files. General counsel Almeta Cooper (1950 -) was senior vice president of health services and general counsel for The Ohio State University Medical Center.

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:

Cooper, Almeta

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

(Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Cooper, Almeta--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

General Counsel

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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 Almeta Cooper, August 18, 2018 and May 10, 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 2/5/2020 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following

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 Almeta Cooper, Section
A2013_163_001_001, TRT: 1:28:20 2013/05/10

Almeta Cooper was born on December 27, 1950 in Durham, North Carolina to Patricia Coles Cooper and Horton Cooper. Her maternal great-grandfather, Hawkins W. Carter, was born free in 1842 in Warrenton, North Carolina. He married Nannie Boyd Carter, and became a state senator during Reconstruction. Cooper's mother was born to seamstress Mary Carter Coles and Archer Coles in Richmond, Virginia. She was raised by her maternal aunt, nurse Patricia Hawkins Carter; and studied social work at the North Carolina College for Negroes. Cooper's paternal family originated in Hallsville, Texas, where her great-grandfather owned a general store and her paternal grandparents, Bishop College graduate Thomas Cooper, Sr. and Almeta Horton Cooper, worked as teachers. Cooper's father graduated from Wiley College and the Atlanta University School of Social Work, and met and married her mother in Durham. In 1960, they moved to Willingboro, New Jersey, and became the town's first African Americans homeowners.

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section
A2013_163_001_002, TRT: 2:31:44 2013/05/10

Almeta Cooper spent her early childhood in an all-black neighborhood of Roanoke, Virginia, where her family lived at 1430 Gilmer Avenue. She started reading at four

years old, and enrolled at the segregated Loudon Elementary School, where she was assigned to the second grade. Cooper was active in Jack and Jill of America, Inc., and spent the summers at Camp Oak Hill in Nottingham, Pennsylvania. When she was nine years old, her family relocated to Willingboro, New Jersey. There, Cooper attended the majority-white Millbrook Park Elementary School, where she was the only black student in her grade. She was placed in the accelerated program; and, in 1963, enrolled one year early at John F. Kennedy High School. That year, she also attended the March on Washington. During high school, Cooper received support from her German language teacher, Lance Cronmiller. She was elected class treasurer, and joined the debate team, the school newspaper staff and the cheerleading squad.

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section
A2013_163_001_003, TRT: 3:28:23 2013/05/10

Almeta Cooper excelled in her French and German courses at John F. Kennedy High School in Willingboro, New Jersey. During the summer, she attended a language program at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. In 1968, Cooper enrolled at Wells College in Aurora, New York, where she majored in German. She was one of nine African American students on campus, and joined the Wells College Black Women's Society. During her sophomore year, she studied abroad at the Schiller College in Heidelberg, Germany. In the following year, she participated in an exchange program at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, where she was inspired by her African art professor, Richard Long. She returned to Wells College for her senior year, and was elected president of the Wells College Black Women's Society. Based upon the advice of a cousin, Cooper decided to pursue a career in law. She was mentored by trial lawyer R. Eugene Pincham, who encouraged her to attend the Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago, Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section
A2013_163_001_004, TRT: 4:29:33 2013/05/10

Almeta Cooper enrolled in 1972 at the Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago, Illinois. There, she served as the research assistant to Professor Samuel C.

Thompson, Jr. After graduating in 1975, she worked for two years at the law firm of Vedder, Price, Kaufman and Kammholz, P.C. Then, Cooper became the assistant director of health law at the American Medical Association. In that role, she served as the first legal counsel to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, and handled appeals for the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. In 1983, Cooper was recruited by Dr. David Satcher to serve as his executive assistant and general counsel at the Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. She worked at Nashville's St. Thomas Hospital from 1989, and then moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1991. There, she oversaw the health professional colleges for the Allegheny Health, Education and Research Foundation. In 1999, Cooper was hired by the Ohio State Medical Association.

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section
A2013_163_001_005, TRT: 5:30:23 2013/05/10

Almeta Cooper became general counsel to the Ohio State Medical Association in 1999. During her tenure, she focused on health policy and advocated for physicians under the new system of managed care. She was also involved in tort reform, and created the Ohio State Medical Association Frivolous Lawsuit Committee to protect physicians from malpractice litigation. In 2008, Cooper became general counsel and vice president for health services at The Ohio State University Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio. In that role, she successfully defended the center's clinical laboratory against a high penalty from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. She was later promoted to executive director for health and human services advocacy, regulatory and quality improvement programs. Cooper talks about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, and her involvement with The Links and the Women's Fund of Central Ohio. She reflects upon her life and her hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section
A2013_163_001_006, TRT: 6:20:37 2013/05/10

Almeta Cooper served as president of the American Health Lawyers Association in 2004. She was honored

with the David J. Greenburg Service Award for her career in health law. At this point in the interview, Cooper talks about her daughter, Elise Nelson, who studied urban planning at Bryn Mawr College and went on to serve as an executive officer of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) under deputy administrator and former astronaut, General Charles Bolden, Jr. Cooper also talks about her friendship with the author Earlene Wandrey. She describes the support she received from the African American community, and reflects upon how she would like to be remembered. Cooper concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_007, TRT: 7:29:37 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_008, TRT: 8:30:50 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_009, TRT: 9:32:09 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_010, TRT: 10:33:12 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_011, TRT: 11:32:19 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_012, TRT: 12:27:03 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_013, TRT: 13:30:00 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_014, TRT: 14:29:45 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_015, TRT: 15:31:04 2018/08/18

Video Oral History Interview with Almeta Cooper, Section A2013_163_002_016, TRT: 16:07:48 2018/08/18