

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dorothy Tucker

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Tucker, Dorothy, 1956- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, |
| Dates: | August 25, 2013 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2013 |
| Physical Description: | 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:26:36). |
| Abstract: | Television news reporter Dorothy Tucker (1956 -) was a general assignment reporter at WBBM-TV in Chicago for almost 30 years, winning nine local Emmy Awards and several other honors. Tucker was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 25, 2013, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2013_222 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Broadcast journalist Dorothy Tucker was born in Chicago, Illinois. She graduated from Austin High School in 1974, before attending Northwestern University as a communications major. While enrolled there, she became an intern at Chicago's WBBM-TV in 1977. In the same year, after graduating, with honors, with her B.S. degree, Tucker was hired as a reporter at WMBD-TV in Peoria, Illinois. She became a reporter in Denver at KWGN and later a reporter and weekend anchor at WREG-TV in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1979, and went to KDKA-TV in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1981, where she reported and hosted an award winning talk show . Tucker returned to WBBM as a general assignment reporter in 1984. In 2009, Tucker began a weekly radio show, *Customer Service*, on WVON-AM.

She serves on the board of the National Association of Black Journalists' Chicago chapter, and co-chaired the organization's fundraiser for victims of Hurricane Katrina who have moved to Illinois since the 2005 disaster. Tucker is a member of Northwestern University's Council of One Hundred. She lives in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. Tucker is married to investment banker Anthony Wilkins, and has three children that all attend Ivy League universities: (Princeton University, Yale University, and the University of Pennsylvania).

She has been honored numerous times throughout her career. On two occasions, Tucker has won the Chicago Association of Black Journalists' annual award for Outstanding Television Reporting, in 1987 and 1994. She has won nine local Emmy Awards, including two for her work on the 2003 and 2004 broadcasts of the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon and one for her breaking news reports during the 2008 Northern Illinois University shootings.

Dorothy Tucker was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on Dorothy Tucker was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 25, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dorothy Tucker was conducted by Thomas Jefferson on August 25, 2013, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Television news reporter Dorothy Tucker (1956 -) was a general assignment reporter at WBBM-TV in Chicago for almost 30 years, winning nine local Emmy Awards and several other honors.

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:

Tucker, Dorothy, 1956-

Jefferson, Thomas (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Tucker, Dorothy, 1956- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Television News Reporter

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Dorothy Tucker, August 25, 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 Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_001, TRT: 1:30:01 ?
Dorothy Tucker was born on April 13, 1956 in Chicago, Illinois to Emma Hill Tucker and Ernest Tucker. Her maternal family owned over 160 acres of land in Shannon, Mississippi, where most of the family lived together. When her mother was an infant, Tucker's maternal grandmother, Hattie Trice Hill, passed away, so Tucker's mother was raised by her siblings and extended family. Tucker's paternal great-grandfather, George Ingol, owned a sawmill, where he employed both white and black workers. Tucker's paternal grandfather, Henry Tucker, died when her father was four years old, and he was primarily raised by his

mother, Lillie Belle Ingol Spates. Tucker's parents met in high school and married shortly after Tucker's mother graduated. They moved to Chicago, where Tucker and her two siblings were raised. Her father owned and operated Precise Products Inc., a tool making factory in Warrenville, Illinois, while her mother was a homemaker. Later in life, she completed college courses to work for Head Start.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_002, TRT: 2:28:58 ?

Dorothy Tucker's maternal great-great-grandfather, George Trice, Sr., was a slave in Mississippi who learned to read from the slave owner's daughter. After emancipation, he purchased over 160 acres of land, which remained in the family over time. His wife, Sarah Mobley Trice, allegedly had Chickasaw Native American heritage. Tucker's paternal great-grandfather, George Ingol, owned a sawmill and general store in Mississippi. He was often able to pass for white and, when traveling, introduced his wife, Alice Ingol, as his slave. The family fled to Ohio for a short time after their house was set on fire. Once, Tucker's paternal grandfather, Henry Tucker, defended the family against a belligerent white man who visited their home. The racism of the South inspired her father, Ernest Tucker, to move to Chicago, Illinois after marrying her mother, Emma Hill Tucker. Tucker was raised by her mother on Chicago's West Side while her father worked long hours at his business. She attended William Cullen Bryant School.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_003, TRT: 3:31:38 ?

Dorothy Tucker grew up in the North Lawndale neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois, where she attended William Cullen Bryant School and Roswell B. Mason Upper Grade Center. During the summer before her eighth grade year, Tucker's father, Ernest Tucker, bought a house in Chicago's Austin neighborhood, which had better schools. At that time, Tucker witnessed the white flight of Austin's Jewish community. Her sister, Joyce Tucker Boykins, was enrolled at Lucy Flower Technical High School, a private, all-girls secondary school. Tucker studied for one year at Robert Emmet Elementary School before enrolling at Austin High School. She performed well academically, striving to meet her parents' high expectations. She often defended her sister against bullies, and faced discrimination from her classmates due to her darker skin tone. Against her mother's objections, Tucker played baseball with the neighborhood boys, and even joined the boys swim team in high school.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_004, TRT: 4:30:32 ?

Dorothy Tucker attended William Cullen Bryant School in Chicago, Illinois before completing one year at the Roswell B. Mason Upper Grade Center. After her family's move to Chicago's Austin neighborhood, she finished the eighth grade at Robert Emmet Elementary School before transitioning to Austin High School. There, Tucker joined the bowling and ski clubs, and the track and boys swim teams. She was also a member of the student government, Future Teachers of America, National Honors Society and the yearbook committee. Through the Chicago Board of Education, she participated in an Introduction to Radio program at WBEZ Radio, where she first became interested in broadcasting. She applied to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois at the recommendation of her high school mentor, Dagny Bloland. There, Tucker studied communications, and audited classes at the university's Medill School of Journalism. She was able to graduate a year early, after completing an internship at WRAU-TV in Peoria, Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_005, TRT: 5:31:16 ?

Dorothy Tucker attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where she produced commentaries for the college's WNUR-Radio station. She also joined Sigma Delta Chi, an organization for journalism majors. Tucker graduated in 1977, and took a position as a nine o'clock news reporter for WMBD-TV in Peoria, Illinois. While living there, Tucker was verbally harassed every night by the white men in her community. After a year, Tucker was fired from WMBD-TV. She applied to various news stations in Denver, Colorado, eventually networking with another black woman to fill her soon-to-be vacant position at the independent station KWGN-TV. Hoping to further her career at a major broadcasting network, Tucker left KWGN-TV after two years, and joined WREG-TV in Memphis, Tennessee. There, she learned how to navigate race issues in the news and government, and to view a story from multiple perspectives, which sharpened her journalism skills.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_006, TRT: 6:29:38 ?

Dorothy Tucker was a reporter for KWGN-TV in Denver, Colorado when she attended the National Association of Black Journalists' second convention in Washington, D.C. There, she met with veteran journalists, like Vernon Jarrett, who emphasized the importance of covering stories in the African American community. After moving to Memphis, Tennessee in 1978 to report for WREG-TV, she worked alongside weekend anchor Pam Crittendon Roberson, and joined the Memphis Association of Black Journalists. As an African American journalist from the North, Tucker had to learn the unspoken rules of reporting in the South. In 1980, Tucker began applying for positions in larger markets, hoping to eventually return to Chicago, Illinois. She interviewed for a station in Buffalo, New York, but rejected their offer because of the cold weather. After speaking with reporter Harold Hayes, whom she had met during an internship in Peoria, Illinois, Tucker accepted a position at KDKA-TV in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_007, TRT: 7:29:20 ?

Dorothy Tucker and fellow journalist, Rehema Ellis, founded the Media Association of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to act as a local chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. At the time, Tucker was a ten o'clock news reporter at KDKA-TV in Pittsburgh. She also hosted a community affairs talk show, where she interviewed local artists and celebrities. To prepare for the competitive news market in Chicago, Illinois, Tucker sought the mentorship of news anchor Bob Petty and the assistant news director at Chicago's WBBM-TV, who told her how to improve her news stories. In 1984, Tucker was hired as a reporter for WBBM-TV. Under Mayor Harold Washington's administration, Tucker witnessed the increased visibility of African American experts in news segments. She talks about the protests against the news station led by Operation PUSH in response to Harry Porterfield's demotion following the return of Bill Kurtis as anchor in 1985.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_008, TRT: 8:29:09 ?

Dorothy Tucker was a reporter for WBBM-TV in Chicago, Illinois when news anchor Harry Porterfield was demoted upon Bill Kurtis' return to the station. As a result of the protests led by Operation PUSH, general manager Gary Cummings was fired, and replaced by Johnathan Rodgers who hired more African American administrative and production employees. Tucker encountered discrimination from a new station manager who made an insulting comment about her skin tone. At one point, Operation PUSH became involved, and Tucker's contract was renewed for another three years. During this time, she also worked as a consumer reporter, and hosted the television talk show

‘Common Ground’ as well as another talk show on WVON Radio. She served on the national board of National Association of Black Journalists for five years. Tucker remembers an incident of discrimination at CBS Radio when newscaster Felicia Middlebrooks discovered that she was paid significantly less than the white deejays on the affiliate stations.

Video Oral History Interview with Dorothy Tucker, Section A2013_222_001_009, TRT: 9:26:04 ?

Dorothy Tucker was with her mother, Emma Hill Tucker, when she learned that she was hired as a reporter for WBBM-TV in Chicago, Illinois. To combat the relentless news reports of violence in Chicago, Tucker advocated for the station to report more positive stories from the African American community, and was initially allowed to present five days of solely uplifting reports. In 1986, she met Anthony Wilkins at a fundraiser, and the two married in 1988. They went on to have three children: Trevor Wilkins, Cody Wilkins and Nya Wilkins. Tucker talks about the positive and negative aspects of her career, and her future projects. She concludes the interview by reflecting upon her legacy.