

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Elinor Tatum

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Tatum, Elinor Ruth, 1971-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Elinor Tatum,
Dates:	November 11, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:25:47).
Abstract:	Newspaper publishing chief executive Elinor Tatum (1971 -) was named publisher and editor-in-chief of the <i>New York Amsterdam News</i> at age twenty six, making her one of the youngest publishers in the history of African American press. Tatum was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 11, 2013, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_282
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Newspaper publisher Elinor Ruth Tatum was born on January 29, 1971 in New York City, New York to Wilbert and Susan Tatum. Her father was a former publisher and chief executive officer of the *New York Amsterdam News*. Tatum was raised in New York City and was educated in the City's primary and secondary schools. She graduated from St. Lawrence University with her B.A. degree in government studies in 1993. Tatum went on to attend Stockholm University in Stockholm, Sweden, where she studied international relations until 1994.

Upon returning from Sweden, Tatum joined her father at the *New York Amsterdam News*, where she accepted a position as assistant to the publisher. In 1996, she was promoted to associate publisher and chief operating officer. Tatum received her M.A. degree in journalism from New York University in 1997, and was promoted to publisher and editor-in-chief of the *New York Amsterdam News*, becoming one of the youngest publishers in the history of African American press. In 2006, Tatum began producing and co-hosting a weekly segment of Al Sharpton's weekly radio show "Keep' in It Real." She has also appeared on WNBC evening news, ARISE, The O'Reilly Factor, 20/20, New York 1, CUNY TV, the Today Show, and NBC Nightly News. After her father passed away in 2009, Tatum assumed full control of the *New York Amsterdam News*.

Tatum has held many civic positions and served on numerous community boards, including St. Lawrence University, the New York Urban League, the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, the Chinatown YMCA, Manhattan Community Board 3, and the Creative Visions Foundation. She was also the former secretary of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

Tatum has received many awards including recognition in Who's Who of American Women; a Doctor Of Humane Letters Honoris Causae from Metropolitan College (New York City); Manhattan Borough Presidents' Women's History Month Award; the Public Advocate of New York City Award of Distinction; the Women Who Make A Difference Award; Outstanding Business Empowerment from the New York Chapter of Black Business and Professional Women Award; Standing On their Shoulders Award from the National Action Network, the Good Scout Award, and the Pi Beta Phi's Members of Distinction Award.

Elinor Tatum was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 11, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Elinor Tatum was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on November 11, 2013, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Newspaper publishing chief executive Elinor Tatum (1971 -) was named publisher and editor-in-chief of the *New York Amsterdam News* at age twenty six, making her one of the youngest publishers in the history of African American press.

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:

Tatum, Elinor Ruth, 1971-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Tatum, Elinor Ruth, 1971---Interviews

African American editors--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

Women publishers--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Newspaper Publishing Chief Executive

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 Elinor Tatum, November 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 2/5/2020 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 Elinor Tatum, Section
A2013_282_001_001, TRT: 1:29:13 2013/11/11

Newspaper publisher Elinor Tatum describes her family history and her childhood. Her mother, Susan Kohn Tatum, was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1934 and lived in Quito, Ecuador before moving to New York City in the late 1940s. She was a children's clothing designer and head of distribution for the 'Village Voice.' Elinor's father, Wilbert Tatum, was born in North Carolina in 1933 where he worked on a farm and was managing editor of his father's newspaper. After serving in the Marines in the Korean War and attending Lincoln University, he lived in Sweden before moving to New York to be a political organizer in 1963. He worked closely with other prominent black politicians such as Basil Paterson and David Dinkins, and served as deputy Manhattan Borough President under Percy Sutton in 1970. Elinor Tatum attended meetings with her father and was involved in his political life from an early age. While at Hunter College Elementary School, Tatum was diagnosed with dyslexia.

Mothers.
African American fathers.

Korean War, 1950-1953--African Americans.

Paterson, Basil A.

Dinkins, David N.

Manhattan (New York, N.Y.). Office of the President.

African Americans--Education--Dyslexia.

Sutton, Percy E.

Video Oral History Interview with Elinor Tatum, Section
A2013_282_001_002, TRT: 2:29:32 2013/11/11

Newspaper publisher Elinor Tatum describes her education and her father's purchase of the 'Amsterdam News' in 1971. Tatum attended the privileged Dwight School starting in seventh grade, where she enjoyed horseback riding and theater. She overcame her dyslexia with the help of a private tutor and the resources of the Dwight School. Tatum decided to go to St. Lawrence University for college in 1989, where she passionately embraced student leadership and performance opportunities. During this time, Tatum became more aware of navigating her black and Jewish identities, and recalls one particular incident when her father was accused of anti-Semitism for supporting Minister Louis Farrakhan. After Tatum's freshman year, she was invited to participate in a life-changing trip to Africa to help refugees fleeing from Mozambique into Malawi in the summer of 1990.

Dwight School (New York, N.Y.).

Childhood and youth--Activities--New York (State)--New York.

St. Lawrence University.

Race identity.

Travel--Africa.

Antisemitism.

Dyslexia.

Video Oral History Interview with Elinor Tatum, Section
A2013_282_001_003, TRT: 3:29:02 2013/11/11

Newspaper publisher Elinor Tatum describes her college experience and beginning to work at the 'Amsterdam News.' In the summer of 1990, she went on a life-

changing trip to Africa to help refugees fleeing Mozambique. This trip, led by photojournalist Dan Eldon, included documentarians Amy Eldon, Roko Belic, and Eiji Shimizu; journalist Jeff Gettleman, and filmmaker Christopher Nolan. She reflects on the strength of her friendships with these people and where they are now. After that trip, Tatum studied at Lincoln University and The New School for Social Research, and attended graduate programs in social welfare at Stockholm University and journalism at New York University. Upon returning from Sweden in 1994, Tatum began work at the 'Amsterdam News' and became Editor-in-Chief in 1997. Tatum then describes the staff and environment of the paper at that time, including the influence of computers and the importance of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

African American college students--Activities.

Travel--Africa.

Eldon, Dan, 1970-1993.

Stockholms universitet.

Lincoln University (Jefferson City, Mo.).

National Newspaper Publishers Association (U.S.).

New York University.

Video Oral History Interview with Elinor Tatum, Section
A2013_282_001_004, TRT: 4:29:38 2013/11/11

Newspaper publisher Elinor Tatum describes how she became Editor-in-Chief of the 'Amsterdam News.' In her graduate program at New York University, she learned the skills and technology that continue to impact the success of print journalism. In spite of the decline in sales of print newspapers, Tatum describes the success of the 'Amsterdam News' in the early 2000's and the impact of the recession on the black press. She talks about bringing the 'Amsterdam Press' into the internet age and stresses the importance of the monetization of online journalism in moving the black press forward. Tatum then reflects on her role in helping others by giving her time and using her paper to give the black community a voice. As a lifelong resident of the East Village, she shares her feelings on

gentrification in New York and her hopes for the black community. She also reflects on the joys of being a mother to her daughter Willa.

New York University.

African American press.

Online journalism.

Gentrification--New York (N.Y.).

Video Oral History Interview with Elinor Tatum, Section
A2013_282_001_005, TRT: 5:09:08 2013/11/11

Newspaper publisher Elinor Tatum describes the changes she wishes to see in the future. Tatum desires parity and representation in leadership positions in all aspects of social, business, and political life. Tatum then talks about the importance of the black community's responsibility to keep fighting for rights like her father's generation. Lastly, Tatum reflects on her legacy and on the legacy of the Obama presidency.

Representative government and representation.

Civil rights.

Obama, Barack.

Video Oral History Interview with Elinor Tatum, Section
A2013_282_001_006, TRT: 6:19:14 2013/11/11

Newspaper publisher Elinor Tatum describes a series of photographs.

Photographs.