

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Pluria Marshall, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Marshall, Pluria, Jr., 1962-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Pluria Marshall, Jr.,
Dates:	November 15, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:33:42).
Abstract:	Broadcast executive, publisher, and newspaper publishing chief executive Pluria Marshall, Jr. (1962 -) was the owner and publisher of the Houston Informer and Texas Freeman and the Los Angeles Wave Publications Group. He also operated WLTH Radio and Integrated Multicultural Media Solutions. Marshall was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 15, 2013, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_295
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Publisher and broadcasting executive Pluria Marshall, Jr. was born on January 17, 1962 in Houston, Texas. His father, Pluria Marshall, Sr., is a professional photographer and a civil rights activist in the media business. Marshall graduated from Clark College, now Clark Atlanta University, in 1984 with his B.S. degree in business administration and management.

In 1981, while attending Clark College, Marshall was hired at KLTV in Tyler,

Texas, as a management-training intern. He spent the next two summers in Lufkin, Texas, and continued his management-training program. He then worked for WXIA-TV in Atlanta, Georgia and for Turner Broadcasting in 1982 and 1983. From 1984 to 1985, Marshall completed his management training and development position at WLBT-TV in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1986, he served as the station manager and then as vice president of WLBM-TV in Meridian, Mississippi. Marshall entered into an agreement to purchase WLBM in 1990, but the transaction did not consummate due to a suspicious fire at the facility in April of that same year. In 1992, he purchased *The Informer & Texas Freeman* in Houston, Texas. Then, in 1993, Marshall became general manager and owner of WLTH Radio in Gary, Indiana, and also purchased the KHRN radio station licensed to the Hearne, Texas, Bryan College Station radio market in 1994. He ran both the AM talk radio station in Gary and the radio station in Bryan College Station for several years.

In 1997, Marshall joined the board of the Wave Community Newspapers, and purchased a controlling interest in 1998. He then purchased the *Los Angeles Independent* in 2000. After the purchase of the *Los Angeles Independent*, Marshall merged both operations to form the Los Angeles Wave Publications Group. In 2013, he launched Integrated Multicultural Media Solutions; a media planning and buying firm that specializes in placing ads that target multicultural audiences. Marshall has been a member of the National Black Media Coalition, the National Association of Broadcasters, and the National Association of Television Programming Executives. He has also served on the boards of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the Texas Association of Broadcasters, the California Newspaper Publishers Association, and the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation. Marshall is chairman of the board and president of the Watts Willowbrook Boys & Girls Club.

Pluria Marshall, Jr. was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 15, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Pluria Marshall, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 15, 2013, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Broadcast executive, publisher, and newspaper publishing chief executive Pluria Marshall, Jr. (1962 -) was the owner and publisher of the Houston Informer and Texas Freeman and the Los Angeles Wave Publications Group. He also operated WLTH Radio and Integrated

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:

Marshall, Pluria, Jr., 1962-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Marshall, Pluria, Jr., 1962---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Publisher

Broadcast 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 Pluria Marshall, Jr., November 15, 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 Pluria Marshall, Jr., Section
A2013_295_001_001, TRT: 1:28:25 2013/11/15

Pluria Marshall, Jr. was born on January 17, 1962 in Houston, Texas to Olivia Pleasant Marshall and Pluria Marshall, Sr. His maternal grandmother was born in Navasota, Texas. She became a beautician and married a barber, with whom she raised ten children in Houston's Third Ward. Marshall's mother studied music at Texas Southern University, and later obtained a master's degree in counseling. Marshall's paternal grandmother, teacher Fannie Hughes Marshall, was born in Brookshire, Texas, and married railroad worker Hugh Marshall. Marshall's parents met while attending Texas Southern University. They married and raised two children in Houston, where his mother became a teacher and his father worked as a photographer. Marshall's father was also a civil rights activist. He led Houston's Operation Breadbasket, and organized protests against the discriminatory practices of businesses like Burger King. He also founded the National Black Media Coalition and the National Association of Black Journalists.

Video Oral History Interview with Pluria Marshall, Jr., Section

A2013_295_001_002, TRT: 2:28:51 2013/11/15

Pluria Marshall, Jr. grew up in a middle class neighborhood in Houston, Texas. There, he was influenced by his father, the civil rights activist and photographer Pluria Marshall, Sr. He often accompanied his father on photo shoots, and served as his grip. Marshall began his education at Houston's Lockhart Elementary School, where he became interested in football. Following his parents' divorce, Marshall moved to Houston's South Union community, where he lived with his maternal grandmother; mother, Olivia Pleasant Marshall; and sister, Mishka Marshall. Marshall was bused to the integrated Johnston Middle School, where he excelled as a sprinter on the track team. Because of his running ability, he was recruited to attend James Madison High School, where he joined the track and football teams. During this time, Marshall also worked part-time at William P. Hobby's KPRC-TV station in Houston. Marshall graduated in 1979, and secured a scholarship to attend Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Pluria Marshall, Jr., Section
A2013_295_001_003, TRT: 3:28:12 2013/11/15

Pluria Marshall, Jr. attended Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia from 1979. During the summers, he interned under black broadcast executive Frank Melton at KLTV-TV in Tyler, Texas and KTRE-TV in Lufkin, Texas. In 1981, Marshall became a sales researcher at Atlanta's recently founded Superstation WTBS-TV. On the weekends, he worked as a grip for WXIA-TV, where he helped cover the Atlanta Missing and Murdered Children cases. Marshall graduated with a business degree in 1984, and was hired by Frank Melton to work at WLBT-TV in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1985, he convinced Melton to promote him to manager at WLBM-TV, a struggling station in Meridian, Mississippi. Despite the hostility of the local white advertisers, Marshall turned a profit after three months, and was promoted to vice president and general manager of the WLBM-TV station. In that role, he oversaw an integrated staff and featured programs like 'The Cosby Show.'

Video Oral History Interview with Pluria Marshall, Jr., Section

A2013_295_001_004, TRT: 4:30:24 2013/11/15

Pluria Marshall, Jr. and his business partner, Alfred Martin, raised \$4.5 million to purchase the WLBM-TV station in 1990. However, the station was burned down by an arsonist before the purchase was finalized. In 1992, Marshall obtained a sales position at KBXX Radio, a black station in Houston, Texas. Later in 1992, he partnered with Lorenzo Butler to purchase a black newspaper called the Houston Informer and Texas Freeman. There, Marshall modernized operations, and increased the paper's revenue. During this time, he also became active with the National Newspaper Publishers Association and the Amalgamated Publishers, Inc. From 1993, Marshall served as the general manager and co-owner of WLTH Radio in Gary, Indiana. In 1994, he also purchased KHRN Radio in Bryan-College Station, Texas. There, he increased the station's profits by focusing on hip hop and R and B music. At this point, Marshall also talks about his editorial philosophy and the history of the Houston Informer and Texas Freeman.

Video Oral History Interview with Pluria Marshall, Jr., Section
A2013_295_001_005, TRT: 5:27:59 2013/11/15

Pluria Marshall, Jr. was recruited to join the board of Wave Community Newspapers, Inc., a community newspaper collective based in Los Angeles, California. After securing financing from the Enron Corporation, Marshall acquired Wave Community Newspapers, Inc. in 2000. To reverse its profit losses, Marshall reduced personnel and downsized operations of the Los Angeles Wave Publications Group. He focused on reporting hard news stories that were relevant to the newspapers' audiences, and created feature columns like the Next Level, which promoted business leaders. During this time, Marshall also joined the California Newspaper Publishers Association, and served as the vice chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. At this point in the interview, Marshall describes his plans for the future, including his hopes for community and minority newspapers and his interest in developing a global black broadcasting company. He concludes this part of the interview by reflecting upon his life.

Video Oral History Interview with Pluria Marshall, Jr., Section
A2013_295_001_006, TRT: 6:09:51 2013/11/15

Pluria Marshall, Jr. established the Black Media Preservation Foundation in 2012. He talks about his plans for the organization, which was intended to support the future of African American media. Marshall reflects upon his family and legacy, and describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.