

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Tina Lewis

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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>	Lewis, Tina (Restaurateur)
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Tina Lewis,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 22, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:29:49).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Restaurant owner and operator Tina Lewis (1948 - ) managed twenty McDonald's restaurant franchises in partnership with her husband, Harold Lewis. Lewis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 22, 2013, in Las Vegas, Nevada. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_347
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Restaurant owner and operator Tina Lewis and her husband, Harold Lewis, have managed twenty McDonald's restaurant franchises since 1987. Lewis met her husband in 1972 while working in the airline industry. Harold was employed with United Airlines in management positions in the sales and human resources departments; Tina worked as a flight attendant and an in-flight services instructor with United Airlines and Continental Airlines.

In 1982, Lewis and her husband embarked on their first business venture when they purchased a Sir Speedy Printing franchise in Los Angeles. Lewis co-managed

the business for four years and assisted in winning a printing contract with the U.S. Olympics Committee. They sold the Sir Speedy Printing franchise in 1986 and began the process of becoming McDonald's restaurant franchise owners and operators. In 1987, Lewis and her husband established HRL Group, LLC and opened their first McDonald's restaurant franchise in Sand Diego, California. From 1987 to 2011, HRL Group, LLC operated twenty McDonald's restaurants.

Lewis has been a leader in the San Diego County McDonald's Operators Association. As a community leader, she has contributed numerous hours and resources to a variety of community organizations and causes. In 1993, Lewis and her husband founded the African American Future Achievers Scholarship Program, which has awarded more than \$550,000 to graduating high school seniors in the San Diego County. In addition, Lewis and her husband have provided scholarships through the Trumpet Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia.

Lewis is a member of the Susan G. Komen Cancer Foundation's national speaker's bureau, and the San Diego Chapter of The Links, Inc. She has also served on the board of directors for the Susan G. Komen Advocacy Alliance, and on the board of directors for the Scripps Polster Breast Center.

Lewis has received numerous awards for her leadership and community service including the California Legislature Assembly Entrepreneurial Spirit Award, the United Negro College Fund Frederick D. Patterson Award, the Urban League Equal Opportunity Award, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women Economic Development Award. She also received the McDonald's Corporation "Ronald Award" for Community Service, the McDonald's Corporation NBMOA Lifetime Achievement Award, and the 2010 Women of Distinction Award.

Tina Lewis was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 22, 2013.

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## **Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Tina Lewis was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on November 22, 2013, in Las Vegas, Nevada, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Restaurant owner and operator Tina Lewis (1948 - ) managed twenty McDonald's restaurant franchises in partnership with her husband, Harold Lewis.

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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:**

Lewis, Tina (Restaurateur)

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Lewis, Tina (Restaurateur)--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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## **Occupations:**

Restaurant Owner and Operator

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

BusinessMakers

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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 Tina Lewis, November 22, 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).

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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

Video Oral History Interview with Tina Lewis, Section  
A2013\_347\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:21 2013/11/22

Tina Lewis was born on June 23, 1948 to Mary LeDuff Ricard and Charles Ricard. Lewis' mother was born in New Roads, Louisiana to Alexander LeDuff and Leora Pierce LeDuff, who died when Lewis' mother was twelve years old. At that time, Lewis' mother left school to care for her eight younger siblings. Lewis' paternal grandparents, Leontine Ricard and Joseph Ricard, founded the St. Francis Xavier Catholic School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Her father was born and raised in Baton Rouge. After serving in the U.S. military, he married Lewis' mother, and they moved into a house on Arizona Street in Baton Rouge. Lewis' father worked in construction, while her mother cared for Lewis and her younger siblings, Charles Ricard, Jr., Gregory Ricard, Gerald Ricard and Connie Ricard. Because both of her parents were Creole, Lewis rarely interacted with either the black or white communities in Baton Rouge. She attended the St. Francis Xavier Catholic School until 1962, when her family moved to Los Angeles, California.

Video Oral History Interview with Tina Lewis, Section  
A2013\_347\_001\_002, TRT: 2:31:11 2013/11/22

Tina Lewis moved with her family to Los Angeles, California when she was fourteen years old. She enrolled at Horace Mann Middle School, and went on to attend Los Angeles High School. Initially, Lewis struggled to adjust to the culture of Los Angeles, where Creoles were not differentiated from African Americans. Eventually, Lewis embraced her identity as a black woman and became

politically active. She enrolled at Los Angeles City College in 1965, and went on to attend California State College at Los Angeles. There, she joined the Black Student Union, met Maulana Karenga and received the Swahili name Kimachu. In 1972, Lewis was hired as a flight attendant for United Airlines. She was based in Chicago, Illinois for two years, and returned to Los Angeles to marry Harold Lewis in 1974. She later transitioned to tobacco and pharmaceuticals sales. In 1982, Lewis and her husband purchased their first franchise from Sir Speedy, Inc. She rapidly grew the business, and secured a contract with the 1984 Summer Olympics.

Video Oral History Interview with Tina Lewis, Section  
A2013\_347\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:11 2013/11/22

Tina Lewis and her husband, Harold Lewis, were initially rejected for a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). With help from a friend in the Reagan administration, they eventually obtained SBA financing to buy a franchise of Sir Speedy, Inc. Later, Lewis' husband was accepted to the Hamburger University training program in Oak Brook, Illinois. However, the McDonald's Corporation was reluctant to place him in full-time courses. Lewis and her husband were unsure how to proceed, until meeting the noted black psychologist Hiawatha Harris in San Diego. Harris introduced Lewis to McDonald's regional vice president, Reginald Webb, who facilitated her husband's entry into the full-time training program. Lewis remained in Los Angeles, where she cared for their son, Jeremy Lewis, and worked two jobs to support the family. After her husband completed the program, they opened their first McDonald's restaurant in San Diego, California. From the start, they worked to build strong ties to the community.

Video Oral History Interview with Tina Lewis, Section  
A2013\_347\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:41 2013/11/22

Tina Lewis and her husband, Harold Lewis, opened their first McDonald's franchise in San Diego, California. They became involved in local politics and philanthropy, and organized the first McDonald's Gospelfest in San Diego in 1992. They opened their second restaurant on Jamacha Road in San Diego. The franchise failed due to its poor

location, and was eventually repurchased by the McDonald's Corporation. In 1988, Lewis gave birth to their twins, Jonathan Lewis and Jennifer Lewis. In 1991, the couple opened McDonald's franchises on University Avenue and in the Hillcrest neighborhood of San Diego. They were supported by corporate managers like Reginald Webb and Gerald Newman, but struggled to build a positive relationship with their regional executive, David Rowe. Despite these challenges, Lewis and her husband continued to build their business. With help from Councilman George Stevens, they won a contract to open three restaurants in the San Diego International Airport in 1993.

Video Oral History Interview with Tina Lewis, Section  
A2013\_347\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:23 2013/11/22

Tina Lewis organized the first McDonald's Gospelfest in San Diego, California in 1992. The festival raised money for the United Negro College Fund and the African American Visionary and Inspirational Leaders Scholarship Program, which was founded by Lewis' family. In the 1990s and 2000s, Lewis and her husband, Harold Lewis, expanded their McDonald's business, opening restaurants in the City Heights and Pacific Beach sections of San Diego; National City, California; and on the Viejas Reservation. In 2007, the couple moved to Las Vegas, Nevada. They sold their restaurants in San Diego, and bought six of the twelve Las Vegas franchises offered by McDonald's executive Donald Thompson. Lewis and her husband established the Lewis Family Foundation and a scholarship program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. They also became involved with The Links, Inc. and The Trumpet Foundation. During this time, their three children began working in the family business, which was incorporated as the HRL Group, LLC.

Video Oral History Interview with Tina Lewis, Section  
A2013\_347\_001\_006, TRT: 6:31:14 2013/11/22

Tina Lewis's father, Charles Ricard, died from cancer in 2000. Shortly afterwards, she was diagnosed with early stage colorectal cancer, which was successfully treated with a mild course of chemotherapy and radiation. In 2001, Lewis was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer,

which was unrelated to her first cancer. She underwent a more severe regime of chemotherapy and radiation, and the cancer went into remission. Within months of her recovery, Lewis became involved as a mentor for patients at the Scripps Polster Breast Care Center in San Diego, California. She began working with the Susan G. Komen organization, and raised over \$150,000 to support cancer facilities in the Bahamas, which had the highest incidence of breast cancer in the world at the time. In 2007, Lewis suffered a severe heart attack, which was caused by the radiation treatment and the chemotherapy drug Adriamycin. At this point, Lewis talks about her plans for her business, and the McDonald's Corporation's NextGen program.

Video Oral History Interview with Tina Lewis, Section  
A2013\_347\_001\_007, TRT: 7:29:48 2013/11/22

Tina Lewis reflects upon her life, including her childhood in the segregated South and the challenges of entrepreneurship. She also talks about her hopes and concerns for the African American community, and describes how she would like to be remembered. Lewis concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.