

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with H. Mitsy Wilson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wilson, H. Mitsy, 1950-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with H. Mitsy Wilson,
Dates:	December 20, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:27:45).
Abstract:	Corporate executive H. Mitsy Wilson (1950 -) was a founding partner of ForAfrica and worked in diversity management for over twenty-five years. She became the Fox Entertainment Group's first senior vice president of diversity development in 2000. Wilson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 20, 2013, in Mission Viejo, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_355
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Corporate executive H. Mitsy Wilson was born on December 13, 1950 in Georgetown, Guyana. She grew up in New York, where she spent her formative years. Wilson graduated from the College of Mount Saint Vincent with her B.A. degree in sociology and social work.

In 1972, Wilson worked as a commercial coordinator for the New York broadcast station WPIX-TV. In 1973, she was hired as a social worker for the Seamen's

Society for Children and Families. Wilson went on to work for the New York Board of Education as director of counseling and special projects. In 1981, she was hired at New York Airlines, where she worked as both manager of training and consumer relations and manager of consumer affairs and baggage services until 1986. Continental Airlines acquired New York Airlines in 1986 and Wilson was promoted to director of consumer affairs and training.

In 1988, Wilson was hired as manager of management training and diversity at Times-Mirror Cable Television. She was promoted to director of leadership development and diversity at Times-Mirror Company in 1995; and, in 1999, she was named corporate vice president of leadership and organizational development. Then, in 2000, Fox Entertainment Group hired Wilson as senior vice president of diversity development, where she was responsible for development, execution and evaluation of all diversity initiatives. The appointment made her the highest-ranking African American female executive at the company. In 2005, she assumed responsibility for all diversity efforts for News Corporation. In 2011, Wilson became a founding partner of ForAfrica, an international consultancy firm specializing in leadership development solutions.

Wilson has received numerous awards, including the New York Governor's Award in 1980, the Minorities in Broadcasting's Phoenix Award in 2003, the 2006 NAACP President's Award, and the 2010 Corporate Executive of the Year Award from the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. She is the Chairperson of Workplace Hollywood, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing, training and placing a diverse workforce in entertainment, and is a former member of the UCLA Medical Affairs Board, Nielsen Media Research African American Advisory Council, and Howard University School of Communications Board.

Wilson lives with her husband, Greg James, and has two daughters, Meisha and Alia; a stepdaughter, Shermian; and three granddaughters, Sherine, Shermika and Esther.

H. Mitsy Wilson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 20, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with H. Mitsy Wilson was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 20, 2013, in Mission Viejo, California, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Corporate executive H. Mitsy Wilson (1950 -) was a founding partner of ForAfrica and worked in diversity

management for over twenty-five years. She became the Fox Entertainment Group's first senior vice president of diversity development in 2000.

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:

Wilson, H. Mitsy, 1950-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Wilson, H. Mitsy, 1950---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Corporate Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 H. Mitsy Wilson, December 20, 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 H. Mitsy Wilson, Section A2013_355_001_001, TRT: 1:30:27 2013/12/20

H. Mitsy Wilson was born on December 13, 1950 in Georgetown, British Guiana to Pearl Richards Wilson and Clement Wilson. Wilson's maternal ancestors belonged to the West African Kru tribe, who were indentured as navigators on European slave ships. Many Kru sailors settled in the Essequibo region of Guiana, which was the home of Wilson's maternal grandmother, Amy Gibson Lo Hing. Wilson's paternal family was from Barbados. Her father immigrated to British Guiana in the 1940s to help build the country's road system, and met Wilson's mother in Georgetown. Wilson's paternal aunts sponsored her father's immigration to New York City, where he became a cabinetmaker and joined the British Guiana Benevolent Association. The rest of the family followed in 1954. Wilson's mother was active in the Civil Rights Movement, and attended the March on Washington. She also helped establish Local 1199, which became the largest healthcare union in the United States.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Mitsy Wilson, Section A2013_355_001_002, TRT: 2:30:05 2013/12/20

H. Mitsy Wilson attended St. Phillip's School in Georgetown, British Guiana from the age of two years old.

After immigrating with her family to the United States, she lived in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, and then moved to the Bronx, New York. There, Wilson's family joined a Catholic church, although her maternal relatives were Episcopalian. Wilson began kindergarten at P.S. 91 in the Bronx, but was too advanced for the class activities and was teased by her classmates for her Guyanese accent. Her mother, Pearl Richards Wilson, was unable to secure a promotion to the next grade, and sent Wilson to St. Nicholas of Tolentine Elementary School instead. She went on to attend St. Nicholas of Tolentine High School, where she helped the basketball team win the state championship. Wilson was the only African American student at the school. She mostly socialized with her family, and often visited the beaches at New York City's Jacob Riis Park.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Mitsy Wilson, Section A2013_355_001_003, TRT: 3:32:10 2013/12/20

H. Mitsy Wilson attended St. Nicholas of Tolentine High School in the Bronx, New York, and worked in the credit department at a Bloomingdale's department store after class. Upon graduating, Wilson aspired to attend a historically black college, but decided to enroll at the College of Mount Saint Vincent in the Bronx, where black students were offered a full scholarship. After facing discrimination from her academic counselor and professors, Wilson formed a Black Student Union in partnership with Manhattan College. They obtained permission to host four events per year, and brought speakers like Stokely Carmichael to campus. After earning her degree in 1972, Wilson secured a social work position at the Seamen's Society for Children and Families in Staten Island, New York. Discouraged by the organization's focus on profit, Wilson began volunteering for a drug prevention education program. She eventually joined the staff, and was promoted to director of counseling and special projects.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Mitsy Wilson, Section A2013_355_001_004, TRT: 4:28:21 2013/12/20

H. Mitsy Wilson entered Corporate America as a reservationist at New York Air in Queens, New York.

After a manager became aware of her instructional experience, Wilson started teaching training classes, and later transitioned to quality assurance. She was eventually promoted to manager of the consumer affairs division, where she worked with the U.S. Department of Transportation to decrease lost baggage. In 1987, New York Air merged with Continental Airlines, which was based in El Paso, Texas. Wilson moved to El Paso as the airline's director of training and customer service. In 1988, Wilson joined Times Mirror Cable Television, Inc. in Los Angeles, California. Originally hired to train management, Wilson protested the company's the lack of diversity and began designing diversity development programs. She eventually rose to corporate vice president. After a hostile takeover by the Tribune Media Company, Wilson joined the Fox Entertainment Group as the senior vice presidency of diversity and development.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Mitsy Wilson, Section
A2013_355_001_005, TRT: 5:29:55 2013/12/20

H. Mitsy Wilson was hired by the Fox Entertainment Group in 2000 to create and head the diversity development division. Earlier that year, the company issued a memorandum of understanding with the NAACP to address their lack of diversity. Wilson worked closely Rupert Murdoch and Peter Chernin, who were senior executives at the Fox Entertainment Group's parent company, News Corporation. She attended the weekly executive meetings, and organized an executive advisory board that met with minority advocacy groups. Wilson founded the Journey to Excellence program, which provided high school students with media mentorship opportunities. She also formed an apprenticeship program at the FOX News station in New York City. After presenting her progress with FOX News reporter Roger Ailes, Rupert Murdoch asked her to implement similar programs at News Corporation. Wilson worked as a consultant there for one year prior to her retirement in 2012. Around this time, she cofounded the nonprofit organization ForAfrica.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Mitsy Wilson, Section
A2013_355_001_006, TRT: 6:28:16 2013/12/20

H. Mitsy Wilson visited Africa for the first time in the early 2000s. She returned in 2003 with Paula Madison, the founder of The Africa Channel. In 2010, Wilson and Madison cofounded ForAfrica with CBS executive Josie Thomas, cultural anthropologist Cheryl Williams and former Concordia University Irvine president J.A.O. Preus III. The organization focused on improving higher educational opportunities in Africa, and initially reached out to the ambassador of Namibia and the political leadership of Zambia. With help from Williams and Preus, Concordia University Irvine developed a partnership with Polytechnic of Namibia in Windhoek, Namibia. At the time of the interview, ForAfrica was working to implement a master's degree program in international studies that emphasized practical experiences in African countries. Wilson shares her hopes for African studies programs in the United States, and talks about the importance of sending African American students to Africa. She also reflects upon her life and legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Mitsy Wilson, Section A2013_355_001_007, TRT: 7:28:31 2013/12/20

H. Mitsy Wilson met her second husband, Gregory James, at a West Indian club in New York City. After they married, Wilson's husband helped care for her daughters, Meisha Wilson Leonard and Alia Wilson Stewart, while Wilson pursued her career. Wilson describes her hopes and concerns for the black community, and talks about the challenges faced by African Americans in Corporate America. Wilson describes how she would like to be remembered, and concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.