

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sharon Epperson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Epperson, Sharon
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Epperson,
Dates:	March 17, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:11:48).
Abstract:	Journalist Sharon Epperson (1968 -) is CNBC's senior commodities and personal finance correspondent. She is the author of <i>The Big Payoff: 8 Steps Couples Can Take to Make the Most of Their Money and Live Richly Ever After</i> . Epperson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 17, 2014, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_062
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Journalist Sharon Emily Epperson was born on April 12, 1968 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her father, Dr. David E. Epperson, served as a dean at the University of Pittsburgh; her mother, Cecelia T. Epperson, was a schoolteacher in the Pittsburgh Public School System. Epperson graduated from Pittsburgh's Taylor Alderdice High School in 1986. She launched her career as a reporter while a participant in the Pittsburgh Black Media Federation's first high school journalism workshop during her sophomore year and later worked as an intern for three summers at her hometown paper "The Pittsburgh Press." She went on to

graduate with her bachelor's degree in sociology and government from Harvard University in 1990, and her Master of International Affairs degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs in 1993. While in college, Epperson interned as a journalist with several prominent papers, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post* and *The Boston Globe*.

From 1993 to 1996, Epperson worked as a correspondent for *Time* magazine, where she covered business, culture, social issues and health in the New York bureau. She was then hired by CNBC in 1996 as a correspondent in the business news division. Epperson was subsequently named CNBC's senior commodities and personal finance correspondent. She reports on personal finance for CNBC and other NBCUniversal properties. She has also reported on global energy, metals and commodities markets from the floor of the New York Mercantile Exchange since 2005.

In 2000, Epperson was hired as an adjunct assistant professor at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, where she teaches a course on professional development for graduate students interested in pursuing media careers.

In addition to reporting for CNBC, Epperson is a regular contributor on NBC's "Today" and Today.com and appears frequently on NBC Nightly News, MSNBC and NBC affiliates nationwide. She also reports for Public Television's "Nightly Business Report." Epperson has been featured in numerous publications, including *USA Weekend*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *Self*, *Essence*, *Ebony* and *Time* magazine. She is the author of the 2007 book *The Big Payoff: 8 Steps Couples Can Take to Make the Most of Their Money -- and Live Richly Ever After*.

Epperson won the Alliance for Women in Media's 2014 Gracie Award for Outstanding Online Host for her "Financial Advisor Playbook" video series on CNBC.com, which was the second time she has been honored by this organization. In addition, she has received numerous other honors: the Vanguard Award from the National Urban League Guild, All-Star Award from the Association of Women in Communications, Trailblazer of the Year Award from the New York Association of Black Journalists, first place honors from the National Association of Black Journalists, and the Silver World Medal from the New York Festivals.

She and her husband, Christopher John Farley, also an award-winning journalist and author, live in Westchester County, New York, with their two children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Sharon Epperson was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on March 17, 2014, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Journalist Sharon Epperson (1968 -) is CNBC's senior commodities and personal finance correspondent. She is the author of *The Big Payoff: 8 Steps Couples Can Take to Make the Most of Their Money and Live Richly Ever After*.

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:

Epperson, Sharon

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Epperson, Sharon--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Journalist

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 Sharon Epperson, March 17, 2014. 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 Sharon Epperson, Section A2014_062_001_001, TRT: 1:29:30 2014/03/17

Sharon Epperson was born on April 12, 1968 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She traces her maternal family history to Cecelia Downing who was born in Virginia in 1860. Her maternal grandparents, J. Edward Trower and Sara Emma Berry Trower, owned Trower's Cleaners, which was at one time the largest black-own dry cleaning business in Pittsburgh. Epperson's mother, Cecelia Trower Epperson was raised in Pittsburgh and became a teacher and stay-at-home mother. Epperson's paternal grandparents, Robert Epperson and Bessie Tibbs Epperson had limited educations; her grandfather was a steel mill worker. Her father, David E. Epperson was Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh.

Epperson describes her parents' upbringing, their religious faith, and how they eventually met and married. She also talks about her earliest childhood memory and her family life as a child. She was raised in Belmar Gardens, an integrated neighborhood in Pittsburgh and her family attended Holy Cross Episcopal Church.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Epperson, Section A2014_062_001_002, TRT: 2:30:25 2014/03/17

Sharon Epperson describes the sights, sounds, and smells of her childhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's Belmar Gardens neighborhood. Epperson spent most of her grade school years at Sterrett Elementary School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania although she moved between several magnet programs. Her love for learning was cultivated by her mother who was an educator before she had children. Epperson talks about her relationship with her younger sister and memorable family vacations as a child. She learned early on the importance of self-reliance and taking care of her sister. Her father was the Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he endured challenges as the only senior black administrator on campus. In 1982, Epperson began her freshman year at Taylor Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh where she discovered her affinity for journalism and through her teacher's encouragement, enrolled in the Urban Journalism Workshop run by the Black Media Federation.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Epperson, Section A2014_062_001_003, TRT: 3:28:00 2014/03/17

Sharon Epperson participated in an actuarial science program at Howard University in Washington, D.C. after her junior year at Taylor Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She describes her college application process; before graduating from high school in 1986, she decided to enroll at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts where she majored in sociology. Epperson recounts her experience as a black student on campus where she participated in organizations like the Freshman Black Table, the Black Students Association, the Kuumba Singers, and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Senior year, Epperson's younger sister

enrolled at Harvard as a freshman. While at Harvard, Epperson interned with several media outlets including WCVB in Boston, Massachusetts, the Wall Street Journal's Pittsburgh office, and Blackside Productions where she met Henry Hampton and Juan Williams, while working as a research assistant for 'Eyes on the Prize.' She joined the NABJ while interning with the Boston Globe.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Epperson, Section
A2014_062_001_004, TRT: 4:32:09 2014/03/17

Sharon Epperson describes her upper middle class upbringing in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania where she participated in Jack and Jill of America with HistoryMaker Susan Davenport. Davenport was one of Epperson's good friends at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as were Erica Thomas and HistoryMakers Soledad O'Brien and Suzanne Malveaux. After graduating from Harvard in 1990 with a B.A. degree in sociology and government, Epperson went to the American University in Cairo, Egypt where she worked in the Kamal Adham Center for Television and Digital Journalism. The Persian Gulf War resulted in her return to the United States. She then entered Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, graduating in 1993. Epperson describes her career as a correspondent at Time magazine where she was mentored by Janice Simpson. At Time, she wrote a story on HistoryMaker Minister Louis Farrakhan and witnessed changes in the magazine's portrayal of African Americans. She left Time to join CNBC in 1996.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Epperson, Section
A2014_062_001_005, TRT: 5:28:11 2014/03/17

Sharon Epperson was hired by CNBC as a financial reporter in 1996. She talks about her transition from print journalism to television and her initially limited background in business and financial matters. Epperson describes the beginning CNBC's early years as well as how the network adapted competitively within a changing media landscape. She reflects upon her development as a television journalist at CNBC and her reports on economic downturns in the United States. At CNBC, Epperson interviewed many high profile CEOs including Bill

Marriot, Rochelle Lazarus, HistoryMaker Robert Johnson, and Andrea Jung. She also interviewed Jane Friedman at HarperCollins, who encouraged her to write her own book. Epperson took Friedman's advice and her first book, 'The Big Payoff: 8 Steps Couples Can Take to Make the Most of Their Money and Live Richly Ever After' was published in 2007. Epperson describes conducting research for the book and writing the book after the birth of her son, Dylan.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Epperson, Section A2014_062_001_006, TRT: 6:30:55 2014/03/17

Sharon Epperson continues to describe her career at CNBC. She talks about the significance of Pamela Thomas-Graham's appointment as the chief executive at CNBC in 2001, one of the few African American woman executives. Epperson also describes changes in the media industry over the past decade, and her decision to stay at CNBC. She considers the state of her professional life and her role as a financial journalist and media personality. Epperson provides advice for aspiring journalists and talks about her family and her hopes for her children. She has a hopeful outlook on the place and progress of African Americans in the United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Epperson, Section A2014_062_001_007, TRT: 7:12:38 2014/03/17

Sharon Epperson talks about the growing divisions between the wealthy and those who are still struggling financially, and her hopes for private investors to work with the government and other organizations to help others, rather than continuing the division in wealth distribution. Epperson describes what she sees as the legacy of her generation, her personal legacy, and what she would do differently. She concludes the interview with an overview of her family's history with Jack and Jill of America, from her involvement as a child to her own children's participation in the organization.