

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Brenda Wood

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wood, Brenda, 1955-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Wood,
Dates:	February 21, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	3 uncompressed MOV digital video files (1:12:30).
Abstract:	Broadcast journalist Brenda Wood (1955 -) has worked as a reporter and news anchor for Atlanta, Georgia's WAGA-TV and WXIA-TV for over thirty-four years. She has received eighteen Emmy awards, six awards from the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists, and the NAACP's Phoenix Award for "Best News Anchor." Wood was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 21, 2014, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_072
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Broadcast journalist Brenda Blackmon Wood was born on September 8, 1955 in Washington, D.C. to Welvin Bray and Bernice Blackmon. Wood graduated from Takoma Academy in Takoma Park, Maryland in 1973. She went on to receive her B.A. degree in speech communication and mass media from Loma Linda University in Southern California in 1977.

Upon graduation in 1977, Wood was hired as a news reporter for WAAY-TV in

Huntsville, Alabama. In 1978, she left that market for a brief time to serve as a general assignment reporter at WSM-TV in Nashville, Tennessee. One year later, Wood returned to WAAY-TV as the evening news anchor. In 1980, she moved to Memphis, Tennessee, where she spent eight years as the evening weekday news anchor for WMC-TV. In 1988, Wood was hired as the evening news anchor and reporter at Atlanta, Georgia's WAGA-TV, where she also hosted the Emmy award-winning news magazine show, *Minute by Minute*. She then joined WXIA-TV in Atlanta in 1997, where she anchors the 6pm and 11pm weekday newscasts, as well as her signature newscast, *The Daily 11 at 7 with Brenda Wood*. Wood was also co-producer and host of WXIA-TV's Emmy award-winning prime time show, *Journeys with Brenda Wood*, which has received the National Association of Black Journalists' 1998 award for Community Affairs Programming.

Throughout her career Wood has received numerous honors and awards, including eighteen Emmy awards from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) Southeast Region; six awards from the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists (AABJ); and three awards from the Georgia Association of Broadcasters (GAB). In 2013 she was named Georgia Woman of the Year by the Governor's Office of the Georgia Women's Commission, and received the Legacy Award from the Atlanta Business League. Wood has also been named Who's Who in Atlanta; awarded the NAACP's Phoenix Award for "Best News Anchor," and named "Best Local News Anchor" by Atlanta Magazine in 1998. Wood has also received an award from the Georgia Chapter of Women in Communication, the Gabriel Award of Merit from the National Association of Catholic Churches, and a journalism award from the Georgia Psychological Association, as well as several awards and honors from local civic and community organizations.

Wood is a member of the NATAS, the NABJ, the AABJ, the Atlanta Press Club, and Women in Film. She serves on the boards of Kenny Leon's True Colors Theater Company and Chayil, Inc., a nonprofit that helps domestic abuse victims. In addition, Wood serves on several local advisory boards in the Atlanta area.

Wood lives in Atlanta, Georgia and has two daughters, Kristen and Kandis.

Brenda Wood was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 21, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Brenda Wood was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 21, 2014, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 3 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Broadcast journalist Brenda Wood (1955 -) has worked

as a reporter and news anchor for Atlanta, Georgia's WAGA-TV and WXIA-TV for over thirty-four years. She has received eighteen Emmy awards, six awards from the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists, and the NAACP's Phoenix Award for "Best News Anchor."

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:

Wood, Brenda, 1955-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Wood, Brenda, 1955---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Broadcast 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 Brenda Wood, February 21, 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 Brenda Wood, Section
A2014_072_001_001, TRT: 1:28:38 2014/02/21

Brenda Wood was born on September 8, 1955 in Washington, D.C. Wood's biological mother, Bernice Blackmon Bray, was born in 1928 in Raleigh, North Carolina. She passed away in 1960 from alcoholism. Wood was raised by her aunt, Alma Montgomery Blackmon. Blackmon was born in 1921 in Washington D.C. She graduated from the D.C. Teacher's College and worked as an early childhood educator at in the D.C. public schools. Blackmon was married to Henry Blackmon, Bernice Blackmon Bray's biological brother. He taught briefly as an educator in North Carolina. Alma Montgomery and Henry Blackmon divorced, and Blackmon left the United States for the Netherlands. He established a successful career as a musician in Europe and was naturalized as a Dutch citizen. Wood grew up in an apartment complex called Fort Chaplain in Northeast Washington, D.C., and attended Smothers Elementary School.

Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Wood, Section
A2014_072_001_002, TRT: 2:30:29 2014/02/21

Brenda Wood's earliest childhood memory is when her biological mother died in 1960. Bray's brother, Henry Blackmon, immigrated to the Netherlands to escape the oppressive racism in the U.S. Wood was raised as a Seventh Day Adventist by Alma Montgomery Blackmon. Blackmon was an educator, vocal coach and pianist in Washington, D.C. Wood remembers taking piano lessons briefly with her mother. Blackmon was Roberta Flack's first piano teacher. Wood remembers growing up with Flack and attending Flack's wedding in 1966. Blackmon was also friends with actress and singer Joyce Bryant. Wood attended Smothers Elementary School, Woodson Junior High School and the Dupont Park Church Seventh Day Adventist School in Washington, D.C. She then attended Takoma Academy High School in Takoma Park, Maryland, also a Seventh Day Adventist school. Wood talks about her high school experience and aspiring to be a Broadway performer. She remembers the 1968 riots in D.C. and watching JC Hayward and Max Robinson on television.

Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Wood, Section
A2014_072_001_003, TRT: 4:13:23 2014/02/21

Brenda Wood developed an interest in speech and communications while at Takoma Academy High School in Takoma Park, Maryland. She graduated from high school in 1973. Her mother, Alma Montgomery Blackmon, was recovering from cancer and had been offered a teaching position at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. Wood chose to enroll as a freshman at Oakwood. In 1975, she transferred into the communications program at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California. In college, she wanted to be an investigative filmmaker. She graduated from Loma Linda University in the spring of 1977 and earned a fellowship to study film at Ohio State University in December of that same year. In the interim, Wood accepted a position as a news reporter for WAAY-TV in Huntsville, Alabama and decided to forfeit the fellowship. She was then promoted to evening news anchor at WAAY-TV in 1978. She accepted an offer to join WSMV-TV in Nashville, Tennessee, then returned to Huntsville, Alabama. She was

married in 1978.