

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Cheryl Burton

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Burton, Cheryl, 1962-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton,
Dates:	May 20, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:35:02).
Abstract:	Broadcast journalist Cheryl Burton (1962 -) is the 5 p.m. weekday co-anchor and 10 p.m. contributing anchor for Chicago's WLS-TV ABC 7 newscasts. Burton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 20, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_152
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Broadcast journalist Cheryl Burton was born on December 25, 1962 in Chicago, Illinois to Hattie and Simpson Burton. She graduated from Chicago's Lindblom Technical High School in 1980, and then received her B.S. degree in psychology and biology from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 1984.

Burton was first seen on television on *Romper Room* and as a contestant on *Star Search*. She then hosted an hour long cable television show entitled *Simply Elegant* and worked as a special education teacher for two years. In 1989, she was hired at WGN-TV in Chicago, Illinois, where she co-anchored "MBR: The

Minority Business Report,” a nationally syndicated weekly series. In 1990, Burton moved to Peoria, Illinois, and worked as a reporter at WMBD-TV. From 1990 to 1992, she served as an anchor for KWCH-DT in Wichita, Kansas, where she also hosted the talk show *Viewpoint*. Burton then joined Chicago’s WLS-TV ABC 7 as a weekend co-anchor and reporter in November of 1992. In 2003, she was promoted to 5 p.m. weekday co-anchor and 10 p.m. contributing anchor for WLS-TV’s newscasts.

Burton has received numerous honors for her work, including three Chicago Association of Black Journalists awards; the 1997 Phenomenal Woman Award from the Expo for Today's Black Woman; a 1998 Kizzy Image and Achievement Award; the 2004 and 2005 Thurgood Marshall Awards; the Vernon Jarrett Par Excellence Award in Journalism; the coveted 2008 National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Salute to Excellence International Award; 2009’s Proctor and Gamble Pioneer Award for community service; and several Emmy Awards. She was also the first recipient of the 2005 "Sisters in the Spirit" Award, given by Chicago area gospel singers to persons who exemplify a faith-based life, and was the first alumna to be inducted into the Robert Lindblom High School’s hall of fame in 2007.

Burton is a volunteer for the Boys and Girls Club of America and serves as a motivational speaker for the Chicago Public Schools. She serves on the boards of the Life with Lupus Guild, the Multicultural Dance Center and City Year. In addition, Burton is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists, the Chicago Association of Black Journalists and the National Association of Black Journalists.

Cheryl Burton was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 20, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Cheryl Burton was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on May 20, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Broadcast journalist Cheryl Burton (1962 -) is the 5 p.m. weekday co-anchor and 10 p.m. contributing anchor for Chicago’s WLS-TV ABC 7 newscasts.

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:

Burton, Cheryl, 1962-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Burton, Cheryl, 1962---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 Cheryl Burton, May 20, 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 Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_001, TRT: 1:30:43 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton describes her family background. Her father, Simpson Leo Burton, was born in 1928 in Birmingham, Alabama to Simpson Burton and Edna Burton, a maid for the Rockefeller family. Burton recalls visiting her paternal great-grandparents in Homewood, Alabama. Her father was raised in Homewood and attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. before transferring to Miles College in Fairfield, Alabama, where he met Burton's mother, Hattie Eloise Woods. Burton's mother was born in 1930 in Birmingham to entrepreneur Dasie Woods and her husband. Burton's parents moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where her father enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and her mother taught airmen to type. They then moved to Chicago, Illinois where Burton was born on December 25, 1962. Her father worked for HistoryMaker John H. Stroger, Jr. and attended Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. Burton recalls her earliest memories and the sights, sounds, and smells of growing up.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_002, TRT: 2:29:05 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton describes her childhood in Chicago, Illinois. Before she was born, her parents and two oldest sisters migrated to Chicago's South Side from Cheyenne, Wyoming, eventually settling in the Chatham community area. There, they lived down the street from Malcolm X's cousin Bishop Charles Little, and her grandmother, Edna

Burton who had previously been a maid to the Rockefeller family in New York, and later babysat HistoryMaker Jesse L. Jackson's children in Chicago. Burton attended Neil Elementary School, Dixon Elementary School, and Lindblom Math & Science Academy High School. Her family attended Greater Institutional A.M.E. Church, Monumental Baptist Church, and then Crerar Memorial Presbyterian Church. As a child, Burton was active in the Girl Scouts and also involved in ballet, piano, and swimming. She describes the sacrifices her parents made for Burton and her siblings to be able to participate in such activities. She also talks about her personality and intelligence as a girl.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_003, TRT: 3:30:41 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton talks about education in her family. Her cousin Kimberly McClure, was a student of Condoleezza Rice at Stanford University, and her sister, Sherri Turk, belonged to the Mortar Board honor society at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Burton recalls briefly running away from home at age twelve, and working for her sister at Elaine Powers Figure Salon at age fifteen. She also worked at Marshall Field's and as an Andy Frain usher. At Lindblom High School in Chicago, Burton studied architectural drafting and was the school's cheerleading captain. She talks about appearing on the TV shows 'Romper Room' and 'Kiddie-a-Go-Go' as a child, and visiting Civil Rights Movement sites with her uncle, a teacher at Bryn Mawr Elementary School in Chicago. She attended UIUC from 1980 to 1984. During her senior year, she was a Chicago Bears cheerleader. Burton talks about her medical internship at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle Campus and her decision not to attend medical school.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_004, TRT: 4:29:41 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton recounts her career during the late 1980s. While in college at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Burton participated in the marching band. In 1984, during her senior year at UIUC, Burton successfully auditioned to become a Chicago Honey Bears cheerleader.

She continued for three years, giving her the opportunity to cheer at the 1986 Super Bowl in which the Chicago Bears defeated the New England Patriots in New Orleans, Louisiana. In New Orleans, her boyfriend, Jim Rose, proposed to her, and the two were married three years later. Burton recalls working as a sales representative for Xerox from 1984 to 1986, as well as the 1983 election of Harold Washington as the Mayor of Chicago. In 1986, she appeared on 'Star Search.' She talks about auditioning for 'Charlie's Angels' with Halle Berry and trying out for Jada Pinkett's role in 'A Different World.' She also talks the beginning of her broadcast news career and her mother's memories of life in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_005, TRT: 5:27:59 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton describes the beginning of her broadcast news career. After hosting a talk show titled 'Simply Elegant' on the Home Shopping Network and the 'Minority Business Report' on WGN-TV in Chicago, Illinois, Burton moved to Peoria, Illinois in 1990 to train as a broadcast journalist at WMBD-TV. During this time, she also substituted for her sister as a special education teacher and married her fiancé, Jim Rose. After seven months in Peoria, Burton was hired as an anchor at KWCH-DT in Wichita, Kansas. She describes her years in Wichita from 1990 to 1992, during which she became the spokesperson for Bombardier private airplanes. In Wichita, Burton also worked on a news segment called 'Baby Your Baby,' aimed at reducing high infant mortality rate. She recalls the Gulf War from 1991 to 1992. In 1992, Burton became an anchor for Chicago's ABC affiliate, WLS-TV. She talks about returning to Chicago right before her father's sudden death from a heart attack. The tragedy brought her family closer together.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_006, TRT: 6:27:44 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton talks about her career as a news anchor for WLS-TV, an ABC affiliate in Chicago, Illinois. At WLS-TV, Burton's colleagues included HistoryMakers Harry Porterfield and Diann Burns. She describes some of the channel's on-screen personalities including Kathy Brock,

Linda Yu, Sylvia Perez, and her husband at the time, Jim Rose. She also describes working for successive station presidents Joe Ahern and Emily Barr, and producing five news broadcasts a day. She also reflects upon the stories of violence she had to cover, and describes how she and Barr were inspired to start Chicago's 'Stop the Violence' campaign, for which she was honored by Mayor Richard M. Daley, and through which she met HistoryMaker Roland Martin. Burton talks about her marriage to Jim Rose and the home they built together in Chicago's Tinley Park. Burton and Rose divorced in 1996. She describes the support she received from her sister after the divorce.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_007, TRT: 7:29:33 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton talks about her divorce from Jim Rose, her charitable efforts, and her friendship with Oprah Winfrey. Burton and Rose divorced in 1996 after thirteen years together, but continued to work together at WLS-TV in Chicago, Illinois. She explains how their relationship remained friendly and professional. Burton was inspired to start an annual Christmas toy drive after meeting homeless mothers and children at a battered women's shelter. She talks about her charity work for orphans and students at Winfrey's Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa. She also talks about interviewing Archbishop Desmond Tutu and making anonymous donations to send underprivileged youth through college. Around 1999, Winfrey invited Burton to interview her, and the two became friends, frequently exchanging personal gifts. Burton recalls Winfrey's 2006 Legends Ball to celebrate African American women, at which HistoryMaker Barack Obama delivered a keynote address. She describes being assaulted in downtown Chicago in 2008.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_008, TRT: 8:36:06 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton reflects upon her life and legacy. As a broadcast journalist in Chicago, Illinois, she often reports on crime and violence, but she explains how she maintains a positive attitude despite sometimes seeing the worst of society. She describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community, and also recounts her

experience being carjacked. Burton describes how broadcast news has changed since the beginning of her career in 1989. She also talks about her personality and her hopes to publish a series of children's books about kids with special needs. She reflects upon her life and what she would do differently. Burton talks about the lack of mentors in her career and about her independent style of learning. Burton considers her personal and professional legacy. She recounts her role with The HistoryMakers, which began with her hosting the organization's first event, 'An Evening with Harry Belafonte' in 2000 during which HistoryMaker Danny Glover interviewed Belafonte.

Video Oral History Interview with Cheryl Burton, Section
A2014_152_001_009, TRT: 9:33:30 2014/05/20

Cheryl Burton narrates her photographs.