

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Denise Bradley-Tyson

---

## 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>	Bradley-Tyson, Denise, 1958-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Denise Bradley-Tyson,
<b>Dates:</b>	December 17, 2015
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2015
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:27:06).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Marketing executive and entrepreneur Denise Bradley-Tyson (1958 - ) served as the founding executive director of the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, California. She also developed the merchandising strategy for Michael Jordan's Space Jam and the marketing campaign for the Africa 05 art initiative. Bradley-Tyson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 17, 2015, in Pleasanton, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2015_009
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Marketing executive and entrepreneur Denise Bradley-Tyson was born on December 5, 1958, in Chicago, Illinois to Lacey Bradley and Howard Bradley. Her family moved to Newark, Ohio, where she was raised, and where she graduated from Newark High School in 1977. Bradley-Tyson earned her B.A. degree in economics and communications from Stanford University in 1981, beginning her career in marketing and communications for HBO and Levi Strauss & Co. before attending Harvard Business School, where she earned her M.B.A. degree in 1986.

Bradley-Tyson worked as the business manager for CBS News' Chicago Bureau until 1991, when she was recruited by Paramount Pictures to work on production finance for "The Arsenio Hall Show." In 1993, Bradley-Tyson successfully pitched QVC on its first African-themed merchandising program, "The African Marketplace." She moved on to Warner Brothers' consumer products division as brand licensing manager, where she developed the merchandising strategy for Michael Jordan's film, *Space Jam*. She would become director of international marketing for Warner Brothers, supporting the firm's international offices and developing their marketing campaigns. She moved to London in 2000, where she was recruited by the Southbank Centre, Europe's largest centre for the arts, to oversee audience development for the largest African contemporary art exhibition in Europe, "Africa Remix." During her time in London, she also served on the steering committee of the Arts Council England under Prime Minister Tony Blair. Bradley-Tyson left London in 2005 when she was recruited to become the founding executive director of the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, California. She brought the museum national and international recognition in its inaugural years. In 2015, Bradley-Tyson founded Inspired Luxe, an online curated shopping company.

Bradley-Tyson has garnered several honors in her career both for her business and marketing acumen, as well as her passion for the arts. She was presented a "Profile of Excellence" award by ABC-7, San Francisco, featured as a

role model in Morrie Turner's syndicated cartoon, "Wee Pals," and named by the San Francisco Business Times as one of the Bay Area's Most Influential Women of 2007. Bradley-Tyson serves as President of the San Francisco Film Commission, and serves as Vice Chair of San Francisco Travel's Tourism Diversity Committee.

Bradley-Tyson lives in San Francisco with her husband, Bernard Tyson, Chairman and CEO of Kaiser Permanente.

Denise Bradley-Tyson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 17, 2015.

---

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Denise Bradley-Tyson was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on December 17, 2015, in Pleasanton, California, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Marketing executive and entrepreneur Denise Bradley-Tyson (1958 - ) served as the founding executive director of the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, California. She also developed the merchandising strategy for Michael Jordan's Space Jam and the marketing campaign for the Africa 05 art initiative.

---

## 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:

Bradley-Tyson, Denise, 1958-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Bradley-Tyson, Denise, 1958- --Interviews

---

## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

## Occupations:

Civic Leader

---

## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

---

## 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 Denise Bradley-Tyson, December 17, 2015. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 6/7/2022 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 Denise Bradley-Tyson, Section A2015\_009\_001\_001, TRT: 1:25:59 2015/12/17

Denise Bradley-Tyson was born on December 5, 1958 in Chicago, Illinois to Lacey Smiley Bradley and Howard Bradley, Sr. Her maternal grandmother, Viney Smiley, was biracial. She married sharecropper Matthew Smiley, with whom she raised thirteen children in Sardis, Alabama. Bradley-Tyson's father was born in Texas, and was the only child of Pullman porter Robert Bradley and Bradley-Tyson's Native American maternal grandmother. Her father went on to join the U.S. Army, and served in the Korean War. He met and married her mother in Chicago, and they raised five children together. When Bradley-Tyson was young, her family relocated to an African American neighborhood in the predominantly white town of Newark, Ohio. There, her father worked at the post office, while her mother cooked at a local restaurant. Bradley-Tyson began her education at Conrad Elementary School in Newark, and went on to attend Lincoln Junior High School. Her father died from lung cancer when she was thirteen years old.

Video Oral History Interview with Denise Bradley-Tyson, Section A2015\_009\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:54 2015/12/17

Denise Bradley-Tyson was assigned to the advanced academic track at Newark High School in Newark, Ohio. She graduated in 1977, and received an academic scholarship to attend Stanford University, where she initially majored in psychology. Bradley-Tyson roomed in the all-black Ujamaa house, where she met future lawyer Valerie Jarrett. During the summers, she interned for Ohio's Congressman John M. Ashbrook in Washington, D.C., and at the Ogilvy and Mather advertising agency in New York City. During her junior year, Bradley-Tyson switched to a double major in economics and communications, and studied abroad in London, England, where she interned at the British Broadcasting Corporation. Upon graduating, she moved to San Francisco, California, where she was accepted into the Home Box Office's management training program. In 1984, she joined Levi Strauss and Company's communications department, where she oversaw marketing for the 1984 Summer Olympics. Later that year, she enrolled at the Harvard Business School.

Video Oral History Interview with Denise Bradley-Tyson, Section A2015\_009\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:37 2015/12/17

Denise Bradley-Tyson studied at the Harvard Business School from 1984 to 1986. Her classmates included investment executive Carla Harris. During her first year, she worked in mergers and acquisitions at Chase Manhattan Bank in New York City. Upon graduating, she joined the finance group at CBS News. In 1989, Bradley-Tyson was promoted to business manager of the CBS News bureau in Chicago, Illinois. In 1991, she was recruited to the Paramount Pictures Corporation in Los Angeles, California, where she oversaw production finance for programs like 'The Arsenio Hall Show.' She left to start an African merchandising program on the QVC shopping network, and then joined Warner Brothers Entertainment Inc., where she developed the brand strategy for Michael Jordan's 'Space Jam' movie. Bradley-Tyson was then promoted to director of international marketing for Warner Home Video. During this time, she also served as president of the San Francisco Film Commission, where she met movie producer Debra Martin Chase.

Video Oral History Interview with Denise Bradley-Tyson, Section A2015\_009\_001\_004, TRT: 4:28:39 2015/12/17

Denise Bradley-Tyson left her position at Warner Home Video in 2000, and

moved to London, England. There, Bradley-Tyson represented the Hayward Gallery during Prime Minister Tony Blair's Africa 05 project, which was a yearlong initiative to promote African art and culture. In this role, she oversaw the exhibition of contemporary African art at the Southbank Centre in collaboration with institutions like the Mori Art Museum in Japan. She also led initiatives to diversify the exhibit's audience. In 2005, Bradley-Tyson was recruited to become the executive director of the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, California. She was selected by a committee of community leaders, including broadcast journalist Belva Davis and social work professor Jewelle Taylor Gibbs. Bradley-Tyson oversaw the museum's launch, fundraising gala and the merchandising of its brand. In 2007, Bradley-Tyson left her position at the Museum of the African Diaspora. Around this time, her mother, Lacey Smiley Bradley, passed away.

Video Oral History Interview with Denise Bradley-Tyson, Section A2015\_009\_001\_005, TRT: 5:34:57 2015/12/17

Denise Bradley-Tyson stepped down from her position as executive director of the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, California in 2007. She went on to serve as an arts project consultant for entities such as the San Francisco Arts Commission. She also launched an online retail company, [inspiredlux.com](http://inspiredlux.com), which featured the craftwork of international artisans and women's cooperatives in countries such as Haiti. During this time, Bradley-Tyson met and married her husband, Kaiser Permanente CEO Bernard J. Tyson. At this point, Bradley-Tyson talks about her plans for the future. She reflects upon her life and legacy, as well as the legacy of her generation. She also describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community, and concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.