

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Carole Copeland Thomas

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Thomas, Carole Copeland
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Carole Copeland Thomas,
Dates:	November 15, 2018 and October 18, 2016
Bulk Dates:	2016 and 2018
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:20:32).
Abstract:	Motivational speaker and business consultant Carole Copeland Thomas (1953 –) founded the temporary employment agency Temporary Solutions in 1987, which grew into C. Thomas and Associates, a full service speaking, training, and facilitation company. Thomas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 15, 2018 and October 18, 2016, in Boston, MA and Lakeville, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2016_104
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Motivational speaker and business consultant Carole Copeland Thomas was born on August 21, 1953 in Detroit, Michigan. Thomas graduated from Cass Technical High School in Detroit, Michigan, and went on to earn her B.A. degree in music, with honors, from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia in 1975. Thomas enrolled at Northeastern University, in Boston, Massachusetts, on a Martin Luther King, Jr. academic fellowship, earning her M.B.A. degree in 1985.

Thomas began her career working in sales for Mary Kay Cosmetics, eventually becoming an independent sales director in 1975. Thomas moved to Boston with her then husband and family, working for the Bank of New England and The Gillette Company as an assistant product manager. Thomas founded Temporary Solutions, a temporary employment agency, in 1987. By 1989, the agency had grown into a full service speaking, training, and facilitation company called C. Thomas and Associates, specializing in diversity, multicultural, leadership, and empowerment issues. Thomas served as a town coordinator for Governor Deval Patrick's 2006 campaign. In 2008, Thomas started The Multicultural Symposium Series (MSS), a face to face, online, and on the air initiative designed to advance the cause of multiculturalism. She hosted the weekly radio talk show "Focus on Empowerment" on Boston's WILD 1090 AM radio, and subsequently on WBNW 1120 AM and Internet radio, from 2003 to 2009. Thomas has spoken at the Federal Highway Administration, SHRM, Hewlett Packard, Verizon, and Cargill, and Monster.com.

Thomas authored several books, including *21 Ways To Bring Multiculturalism To Your Job Your Home and Your Community* and *Real Women, Real Issues: Positive Collaborations for Business Success*. She also served as the executive coach for the *Essence* Magazine Leadership Summit. Thomas became a life member of the National Black MBA Association in 1986, serving as president of the Boston Chapter, national vice chair, and a co-founder of the Leaders of Tomorrow program. She served as the Tri State coordinator for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and as the chair of the Multicultural Committee for the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau. Thomas also served as an adjunct professor at Bentley University.

Thomas has three children: Lorna, Michelle, and the late Mickarl, as well as two grandchildren, Julianna and Gabrielle.

Carole Copeland Thomas was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 18, 2016.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Carole Copeland Thomas was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 15, 2018 and October 18, 2016, in Boston, MA and Lakeville, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Motivational speaker and business consultant Carole Copeland Thomas (1953 –) founded the temporary employment agency Temporary

Solutions in 1987, which grew into C. Thomas and Associates, a full service speaking, training, and facilitation company.

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:

Thomas, Carole Copeland

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Thomas, Carole Copeland--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Motivational Speaker

Business Consultant

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|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 Carole Copeland Thomas, November 15, 2018 and October 18, 2016. 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 Carole Copeland Thomas, Section A2016_104_001_001, TRT: 1:29:37 2016/10/18

Carole Copeland Thomas was born on August 21, 1953 in Detroit, Michigan to Gwendolyn Charleston Copeland and Wilson Copeland, Sr. Her maternal great-grandmother, Sarah Gaines Charleston, was descended from slaves, and owned six hundred acres of land in Columbus, Georgia. The land was later purchased by the U.S. government to build Fort Benning. Thomas' maternal great-grandmother married an African Methodist Episcopal minister, and gave birth to Thomas' grandfather, James Charleston. He also became a minister, and founded the St. Paul A.M.E. Church in Detroit. There, he married Nora Charleston, with whom he raised Thomas' mother, who was their only child. Thomas' father was born to Carrie Copeland and Bradley Copeland in Clinton, South Carolina. After they divorced, Thomas' paternal grandmother brought Thomas' father and uncle to Bel Air, Maryland. She purchased her own home with her small salary as a domestic, and later married a World War II veteran named John Brown.

Video Oral History Interview with Carole Copeland Thomas, Section

A2016_104_001_002, TRT: 2:28:37 2016/10/18

Carole Copeland Thomas's father, Wilson Copeland, graduated from Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore, Maryland. He studied at the Virginia State College for Negroes in Petersburg, Virginia, where he joined the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. After graduating in 1941, Thomas's father became a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, and was stationed with the Tuskegee Airmen at the Selfridge Army Air Base in Michigan. After his discharge, he met Thomas' mother, Gwendolyn Charleston Copeland, who was a student at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. They married and moved to Detroit, Michigan, where Thomas' mother taught at Greusel Junior High School and her father owned an oil trucking business called the Blue Flame Oil Company. In the late 1950s, her father pursued a business opportunity in Ghana, where he later worked for the U.S. Department of State. Thomas' parents divorced shortly after her father left the country, and Thomas remained with her mother and maternal grandparents in Detroit.

Video Oral History Interview with Carole Copeland Thomas, Section A2016_104_001_003, TRT: 3:29:23 2016/10/18

Carole Copeland Thomas grew up in Detroit, Michigan, where she attended Cass Technical High School. There, she majored in music and joined the Harp and Vocal Ensemble, which was led by Velma Froude. After earning her diploma in 1971, Thomas enrolled at the majority-white Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where she continued her music education. During her junior year, she married Mickarl Thomas, Sr., who was enrolled at the Interdenominational Theological Center. She also befriended the wife of Ralph Abernathy, Juanita Jones Abernathy, who introduced her to Mary Kay Cosmetics. Thomas went on to become a Mary Kay sales representative under Ruell Cone, who was one of the company's first national sales directors. Thomas graduated from Emory University in 1975, and gave birth to her first child in the following year. She also talks about the riots of 1967 in Detroit, and the prevalence of racial terrorism in Georgia during the 1970s.

Video Oral History Interview with Carole Copeland Thomas, Section

A2016_104_001_004, TRT: 4:30:24 2016/10/18

Carole Copeland Thomas worked as a sales representative for Mary Kay Inc. in Columbus, Georgia, where her husband, Mickarl Thomas, Sr., pastored the Allen Temple A.M.E. Church. They later moved to Norristown, Pennsylvania, where Thomas raised three children and worked full time. In 1981, Thomas' husband was transferred to the Charles Street A.M.E. Church in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. Because of the school desegregation crisis, Thomas moved her family to Middleton, Massachusetts, which was a suburb of Boston. Later, she enrolled in the M.B.A. degree program at Northeastern University in Boston. While attending graduate school, she received help with childcare from the members of her congregation and her parents-in-law. Thomas graduated from Northeastern University in 1985, and secured a brand management position with The Gillette Company. She concludes this part of the interview by describes the benefits of an M.B.A. degree for a career in Corporate America.

Video Oral History Interview with Carole Copeland Thomas, Section A2016_104_002_005, TRT: 5:32:06 2018/11/15

Video Oral History Interview with Carole Copeland Thomas, Section A2016_104_002_006, TRT: 6:29:22 2018/11/15

Video Oral History Interview with Carole Copeland Thomas, Section A2016_104_002_007, TRT: 7:14:34 2018/11/15

Video Oral History Interview with Carole Copeland Thomas, Section A2016_104_002_008, TRT: 8:06:29 2018/11/15