

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Audrey M. Edmonson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Edmonson, Audrey, 1953-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Audrey M. Edmonson,
Dates:	March 10, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	3 uncompressed MOV digital video files (1:29:01).
Abstract:	Mayor and city commissioner Audrey M. Edmonson (1953 -) was mayor of the Village of El Portal for six years before serving the Miami Dade Board of Commissioners for twelve years. Edmonson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 10, 2017, in Miami, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_035
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Audrey M. Edmonson was born on January 27, 1953 in Miami, Florida. She graduated from Miami Jackson Senior High School in Miami, Florida in 1971. Edmonson earned her A.A. degree in psychology from Miami Dade College in 1991, and her B.A. degree in psychology from Florida International University in 1994. Edmonson received her dual M.S. degree in marriage family therapy and mental health counseling from Barry University in 1997.

In 1997, she was elected as a councilperson to the Village of El Portal City Council in Florida. In 1999, she was elected mayor of the Village of El Portal,

Florida and became the city's second African American mayor. During the same year, Edmonson began working as a trust specialist in the Miami Dade Public School system. Edmonson was re-elected three successive terms and became the municipality's first mayor to be elected by residents rather than by the members of the Village Council. Under her leadership, the Village hired its first Village Manager. In 2005, when she was elected as commissioner for the 3rd District on the Miami-Dade County Commission. She was re-elected three more times and in 2010 and 2016, she was elected to serve as vice chair. In 2018, Edmonson was elected to serve as president of the Miami-Dade County Commission.

Edmonson was chairwoman of the Housing and Social Services Committee and the Building Safer Neighborhoods Sub-Committee. She also served as vice chairwoman of the Transportation and Public Works Committee and the Chairman's Policy Council, and as a member of the Youth Crime Task Force. She served as the vice chairwoman of the Miami Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) Board of Directors. Edmonson was appointed to the Miami-Dade County HIV/AIDS "Getting to Zero" Task Force and served as Chairwoman of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) I-395 Signature Bridge-Aesthetic Steering Committee. She also serves on the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust and the Public Health Trust nominating councils, the Public Health Trust/Miami-Dade Annual Operating Agreement Committee, the Jackson Health System Obligation Bond Citizens' Advisory Committee and the County Advisory Task Force for the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program Planning and Implementation Project which is referred locally as Project PEACE: People Engaged and Advocating for Community Empowerment. Vice Chairwoman Edmonson serves as the Vice Chair of the International Trade Consortium Board.

In addition to her work as a city commissioner, Edmonson was also involved in many different community organizations. She was a member of the Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. and the Links, Incorporated. She also helped create the Miami Children's Initiative in 2006, where she served as a board member. Edmonson served as a board member for the Frost Science Museum, the JMH Citizen's Advisory Board, and the JMH Nominating Committee. Edmonson was recognized for her community work by *South Florida Magazine*, which named her one of "South Florida's 50 Most Powerful Black Professionals." Edmonson has two children, Dr. Ebony Nicole Dunn and Louis Ivory Edmonson and three grandchildren.

Audrey M. Edmonson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 10, 2017.

This life oral history interview with Audrey M. Edmonson was conducted by Harriette Cole on March 10, 2017, in Miami, Florida, and was recorded on 3 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Mayor and city commissioner Audrey M. Edmonson (1953 -) was mayor of the Village of El Portal for six years before serving the Miami Dade Board of Commissioners for twelve years.

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:

Edmonson, Audrey, 1953-

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Edmonson, Audrey, 1953---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

City Commissioner

Mayor

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers|PoliticalMakers

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 Audrey M. Edmonson, March 10, 2017. 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 Audrey M. Edmonson, Section A2017_035_001_001, TRT: 1:31:06 2017/03/10

Audrey M. Edmonson was born on January 27, 1953 in Miami, Florida to Florence Downs Smith and Earnest Moss. Her maternal grandparents, Miriam Minnis Smith and James Smith, lived in Nassau in the Bahamas, where they raised their fourteen children, including Edmonson's mother who was born in 1914. The family immigrated to the Overtown community of Miami in 1917. There, Edmonson's maternal grandfather provided for the family while her maternal grandmother cared for the household. Her mother married John Sands when she was fourteen years old and had two children. They ultimately divorced, and Edmonson's mother married Terefus Monroe, with whom she had three more children. Edmonson's father was born on Crooked Island in the Bahamas, and later moved to Miami, where he met Edmonson's mother. They separated shortly after Edmonson's birth, and her mother

then married Sevenell Downs, a sanitation worker for Miami-Dade County. Edmonson grew up in Miami's Liberty City neighborhood, and spent her summers in the Bahamas.

Video Oral History Interview with Audrey M. Edmonson, Section A2017_035_001_002, TRT: 2:28:47 2017/03/10

Audrey M. Edmonson was raised in Miami, Florida in close proximity to her maternal grandmother, aunts and cousins. Edmonson began her education at Liberty City Elementary School. In 1960, following changes to discriminatory housing policies, her family purchased a home in a majority white neighborhood, where Edmonson attended Allapattah Elementary School and Allapattah Junior High School. Within years, the area became predominately black due to white flight. She enrolled at Miami Edison High School for one year, where she participated in a sit-in to integrate the cheerleading team. She then transferred to Miami Jackson High School, where she was involved in a range of groups like Optimist International and Junior Achievement USA. After graduating, she worked briefly as a computer programmer before joining Eastern Air Lines as one of the first African American flight attendants from Miami. She talks about the strenuous application process, which included losing weight and dyeing her hair to meet standards.

Video Oral History Interview with Audrey M. Edmonson, Section A2017_035_001_003, TRT: 3:29:08 2017/03/10

Audrey M. Edmonson worked as a flight attendant and supervisor with Eastern Air Lines for sixteen years. In 1973, she married car salesman and finance manager Louis Edmonson, and their daughter, Ebony Edmonson Dunn, was born in 1976. In 1987, Edmonson started her cleaning company, AT Services, while working at Eastern Air Lines. She and her husband adopted Louis Ivory Edmonson in 1989, at which time, Edmonson sold her company and left Eastern Air Lines to care for him full time. During this period, she became involved in politics, and worked on the campaigns of Barbara Carey-Shuler and Carrie P. Meek, who she met through Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. She also returned to school, and completed an A.A. in psychology at Miami-Dade

Community College, a B.A. in psychology at Florida International University and an M.S. in marriage and family therapy and mental health counseling at Barry University. She then worked for the New Horizons Community Mental Health Center, where she counseled both children and adults.