

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Virginia Edwards Maynor

---

## 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>              | Maynor, Virginia Edwards, 1945-  |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Virginia Edwards Maynor,  |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | February 10, 2017  |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2017   |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:18:55).  |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Educator Virginia Edwards Maynor (1945 - ) served in various positions in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School system for over thirty years. She was the school district's first African American female superintendent, from 1998 to her retirement in 2001. Maynor was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 10, 2017, in Savannah, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2017_050  |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.  |

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator Virginia Edwards Maynor was born on April 1, 1945 in Savannah, Georgia to Freddie Mae Jones-Williams and John Roger Williams. She graduated from Alfred Ely Beach High School in 1963. Maynor earned her B.S. degree from Savannah State University in Savannah, Georgia in 1968, her M.Ed. degree in history from Armstrong State University in Savannah, Georgia in 1974, and her Ed.S. degree from Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia in 1982. She also earned a leadership certificate from Harvard University's Leadership

Institute in 1985.

Maynor began her career in education as a third grade teacher in the Horry County School system. From 1969 to 1970, she taught in the Ridgeland South Carolina Public School system. Maynor then joined the Savannah-Chatham County Public School system as a teacher in 1970. She was promoted to the positions of assistant principal, principal, executive director of secondary schools, and deputy superintendent of instruction. In 1998, Maynor became the superintendent of Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, where she remained until 2001. She was the school district's first African American female superintendent. Maynor also represented the First Congressional District on the Georgia State Board of Education.

Maynor received the Outstanding Leadership Award from Savannah State University, the Omega Citizen of the Year Award from Omega Psi Phi Fraternity's Mu Phi Chapter, the Outstanding Educator Award from the Georgia Retired Educators Association, the Citizen of the Year Award from the Mutual Benevolent Society, Inc., an Award of Appreciation from Myers Middle School P.T.A., the Spirit of Education Award from Alpha Kappa Alpha, and the Civil Rights Museum Award from the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.

Maynor was a member of the Chatham Retired Educators Association, BAPS, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She also served as president of the Savannah Chapter of The Links, Inc. from 1995 to 2015, as fund development chair of Greenbriar Children's Center, Inc. from 2000 to 2012, on the Board of Directors for the Telfair Museum from 2009 to 2011, and on the Board of Directors for Hospice Savannah from 2008 to 2011.

Virginia Edwards Maynor was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 10, 2017.

---

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Virginia Edwards Maynor was conducted by Denise Gines on February 10, 2017, in Savannah, Georgia, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Educator Virginia Edwards Maynor (1945 - ) served in various positions in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School system for over thirty years. She was the school district's first African American female superintendent, from 1998 to her retirement in 2001.

---

# 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:

Maynor, Virginia Edwards, 1945-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

## **Occupations:**

Educator

---

## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

EducationMakers

---

## **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 Virginia Edwards Maynor, February 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

## 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 Virginia Edwards Maynor, Section A2017\_050\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:53 2017/02/10

Virginia Edwards Maynor was born on April 1, 1945 in Savannah, Georgia to Freddie Mae Jones Williams and John Williams, Sr. Her maternal great-grandfather, Tillman Hankerson, Sr., was one of the largest landowners in Burke County, Georgia. His will was archived in the local courthouse to commemorate his status in the community. Her maternal grandfather, Fred Jones, was biracial, and moved to Savannah with his family after a conflict with the white residents of Burke County. Maynor's paternal grandmother, Ida Sapp Williams, was the matriarch of her family and an active member of the Bethel A.M.E Church in Savannah. Maynor's mother was a homemaker, and also worked as a receptionist at a dentist's office, while her father was a master automobile painter. Maynor was raised in the Cann Park neighborhood of Savannah, where she attended the segregated George W. DeRenne Elementary School. She was a member of the Girl Scouts, and enjoyed reading at Savannah's Carnegie Library.

Video Oral History Interview with Virginia Edwards Maynor, Section A2017\_050\_001\_002, TRT: 2:22:04 2017/02/10

Virginia Edwards Maynor attended George W. DeRenne Elementary School in Savannah, Georgia. Her second grade teacher, Nancy Walker, was also the leader of her

Girl Scout troop. At this time, Savannah-Chatham Public Schools did not provide bus service for African American students. As a result, Maynor was forced to walk farther several miles to attend the eighth grade at Cuyler Junior High School. Later, a middle school annex was built at Alfred E. Beach High School to serve the neighborhood of Cann Park. At Alfred E. Beach High School, Maynor belonged to the student council, and helped plan both the middle school and high school proms. She was also a member of the National Honor Society and the Excelsiors. During this time, Maynor converted to Presbyterianism. She organized dances and vacation bible school at Savannah's Butler Presbyterian Church, where she was mentored by the minister's wife, Mattie Beverly Patterson. After graduating from high school, Maynor enrolled at Savannah State College.

Video Oral History Interview with Virginia Edwards Maynor, Section A2017\_050\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:22 2017/02/10

Virginia Edwards Maynor graduated from Savannah State College in 1967, and joined her husband at the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base in South Carolina. She applied to teach at the school on the base, but was denied a full position because of her race, and was forced to work as a teaching assistant instead. In 1968, Maynor joined the faculty of the newly integrated Cuyler Junior High School in Savannah, Georgia. Shortly afterwards, she was asked to integrate the staff at Savannah High School. While teaching there, Maynor received a master's degree in history education from Savannah's Armstrong State College in 1974. She was promoted to curriculum specialist at Windsor Forest High School, and then became the assistant principal of Herschel V. Jenkins High School. After being denied the position of social studies district supervisor, Maynor filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In exchange for retracting the complaint, she was named principal of George W. DeRenne Middle School.

Video Oral History Interview with Virginia Edwards Maynor, Section A2017\_050\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:05 2017/02/10

Virginia Edwards Maynor served as the principal of George W. DeRenne Middle School in Savannah, Georgia

until 1989, when she was promoted to executive director of elementary schools for Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). She went on to become the district's deputy superintendent. In that role, she implemented programs for student literacy, school leadership and early childhood education. When the superintendent retired, Maynor was chosen as interim superintendent by the school board. She was permanently named to the position after handling an issue with racism at a local elementary school. Over time, Maynor conflicted with new members of the school board, who underpaid her and attempted to oust her by hiring her successor in the middle of her three-year term. Maynor was the first black superintendent of SCCPSS to serve a full term. She also served as the fundraising chairperson of the Greenbriar Children's Center in Savannah, and as president of her chapter of The Links.

Video Oral History Interview with Virginia Edwards Maynor, Section A2017\_050\_001\_005, TRT: 5:30:31 2017/02/10

Virginia Edwards Maynor retired from the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System in 2001, and continued to mentor young educators after her departure. In 2009, Maynor reconnected with her classmate William H. Maynor during a reunion for Albert E. Beach High School in Savannah, Georgia. The couple married in 2010. Maynor reflects upon her life and legacy, and talks about her plans for the future. She also remembers the election of President Barack Obama and its significance to the African American community. Maynor then reflects upon her career as an educator, and shares a message to future generations about the importance of education. She concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.