

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with LaVetta Forbes

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## 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>	Forbes, LaVetta, 1940-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes,
<b>Dates:</b>	February 27, 2018
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2018
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:55:18).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Fashion designer LaVetta Forbes (1940- ) was a celebrity dressmaker and designer is the creator of LaVetta scarf dress and the publisher of BeverlyHills90212, an upscale magazine. Forbes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 27, 2018, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2018_025
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Fashion designer LaVetta Forbes was born on November 9, 1940 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Benjamin and Lillian Forbes. She began sewing at the age of six and in her teens worked for her aunt who was a dressmaker. In 1955, at the age of fifteen, Forbes moved to Los Angeles on her own and attended night school and found day work as a dress designer. Forbes then relocated to San Francisco and designed dresses for evening events. By the 1960s, Forbes was designing dresses for performers like Leslie Uggams, Lainie Kazan and the Supremes. Forbes entertained and hosted guests at the landmark Ambassador Hotel Coconut Grove and hosted luncheons to introduce and market her designs.

During the late 1970s, inspired by the use of scarf fabric, she created the LaVetta scarf dress. The collection of designs, made mostly from Oriental silk squares in flowered, geometric and paisley patterns, were 98% handmade with hems that were hand rolled, buttonholes hand bound and seams hand stitched. The scarves were used as dresses as well as tunics that were worn over pants. Elizabeth Taylor, Nancy Wilson, Alexis Smith and Helen Gurley Brown were among the La Vetta scarf dress collectors. With her business revitalized, the La Vetta clothing line became available at exclusive retailers including Giorgio's and Neiman-Marcus in Beverly Hills, Saks Fifth Avenue and Martha's in New York, Palm Beach and Bar Harbor. Her personal client list included; Lena Horne, Diana Ross, Nancy Walker, Beverly Sassoon, Alexis Smith, Jayne Meadows, Marge Champion, Mrs. Clark Gable, Mrs. Robert Stack, Mrs. George Woods, and Eleanor Howard.

In 1990, Forbes began publishing *Beverly Hills 90212* a glossy bi-monthly magazine. Targeted to Beverly Hills, Bel-Air, and adjacent upscale neighborhoods with a readership of 60,000, the publication was delivered free to homes around Beverly Hills and sold at newsstands.

Forbes has been a member of the Los Angeles Museum Costume Council and the Blue Ribbon 400. She also served as a board member for The Southeast Symphony Association.

Forbes lives in Los Angeles and has one adult child, Tony.

LaVetta Forbes was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 27, 2018.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with LaVetta Forbes was conducted by Harriette Cole on February 27, 2018, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Fashion designer LaVetta Forbes (1940- ) was a celebrity dressmaker and designer is the creator of LaVetta scarf dress and the publisher of BeverlyHills90212, an upscale magazine.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Forbes, LaVetta, 1940-

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Forbes, LaVetta, 1940- --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Fashion Designer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

StyleMakers

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## 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 LaVetta Forbes, February 27, 2018. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes, Section A2018\_025\_001\_001, TRT: ?

Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes, Section A2018\_025\_001\_002, TRT: 2:30:51 ?

Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes, Section A2018\_025\_001\_003, TRT: 3:30:52 ?

Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes, Section A2018\_025\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:36 ?

Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes, Section A2018\_025\_001\_005, TRT: 5:28:11 ?

Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes, Section A2018\_025\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:47 ?

Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes, Section A2018\_025\_001\_007, TRT: 7:09:16 ?

Video Oral History Interview with LaVetta Forbes, Section A2018\_025\_001\_008, TRT: 8:16:45 ?