

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Johnnetta Betsch Cole

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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>	Cole, Johnnetta B.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole,
<b>Dates:</b>	February 11, 2019
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2019
<b>Physical Description:</b>	15 uncompressed MOV digital video files (7:23:18).
<b>Abstract:</b>	College president, museum director and civic leader Johnnetta Betsch Cole (1936 - ) became the first African American female president of Spelman College in 1987 before being named director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in 2009. Cole was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 11, 2019, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2019_016
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

College president, museum director and civic leader Johnnetta Betsch Cole was born on October 19, 1936 in Jacksonville, Florida to John Thomas and Mary Frances Lewis Betsch. She was admitted to Fisk University at the age of fifteen, and later transferred to Oberlin College where she received her B.A. degree in sociology in 1957. Cole earned her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in anthropology from Northwestern University in 1959 and 1967.

In 1970, Cole accepted a faculty position at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she served as a professor of anthropology and Afro-American studies. In 1982, Cole joined the faculty at Hunter College and served as the director of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program at the CUNY Graduate Center. She was named the first black woman president of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia in 1987. During her tenure as president, she led a campaign that raised over \$113 million dollars, attracted higher student enrollment, and improved Spelman's overall ranking. In 1992, Cole served on President Bill Clinton's transition team as cluster coordinator for education, labor, and the arts. After leaving Spelman in 1997, Cole joined Emory University as a Presidential Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, Women Studies and African American studies. From 2002 to 2007, she served as the president of Bennett College. There, she led a \$50 million campaign, raised funds for an on-campus art museum, and initiated the women's studies and global studies programs. In 2009, she was named director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in Washington D.C.

Cole authored and edited numerous books including *All American Women: Lines That Divide, Ties That Bind* (ed.) in 1986, *Anthropology for the Ninties* (ed.) in 1988, *Conversations: Straight Talk with America's Sister President* in 1994, *Gender Talk – the Struggle for Women's Equality in African American's Communities* in 2003, edited with Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Who Should Be First? Feminist Speak Out On The 2008 Presidential Campaign*, edited with Beverly Guy-Sheftall in 2010, and *Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion in Museums*, edited with Laura L. Lott in 2019.

Cole has served on the boards of Coca Cola Enterprises, Merck & Co., Home Depot, the Rockefeller Foundation, and United Way of America. She also served as chair of the Johnnetta B. Cole Global Diversity and Inclusion Institute at Bennett College, and she served as the President of the Association of Art Museum Directors. She is currently the chair and president of the National Council of Negro Women.

She has received numerous awards, including the 1988 Candace Award from the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, the 2013 Alston-Jones International Civil and Human Rights Award, the Reginald Wilson Diversity Leadership Award from the American Council on Education, and the BET Honors Award for Education in 2015. Cole has been awarded sixty-nine honorary degrees and is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

Cole is married to James D. Staton, Jr. She has three sons, one step-son and three grandchildren.

Johnnetta Betsch Cole was interviewed by *TheHistoryMakers* on February 11, 2019.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on February 11, 2019, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 15 uncompressed MOV digital video files. College president, museum director and civic leader Johnnetta Betsch Cole (1936 - ) became the first African American female president of Spelman College in 1987 before being named director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in 2009.

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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:

Cole, Johnnetta B.

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Cole, Johnnetta B.--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:

College President

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Museum Director

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Civic Leader

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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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 Johnnetta Betsch Cole, February 11, 2019. 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 Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_001, TRT: 1:24:37 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_002, TRT: 2:32:25 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:45 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_004, TRT: 4:30:30 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_005, TRT: 5:30:38 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_006, TRT: 6:25:24 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_007, TRT: 7:38:23 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_008, TRT: 8:34:45 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_009, TRT: 9:29:35 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_010, TRT: 10:33:53 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_011, TRT: 11:29:15 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_012, TRT: 12:29:26 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_013, TRT: 13:28:36 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_014, TRT: 14:28:37 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Section A2019\_016\_001\_015, TRT: 15:17:29 ?