

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Belva Davis

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Davis, Belva, 1933-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Belva Davis,
Dates:	March 27, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:49:21).
Abstract:	Television anchor Belva Davis (1932 -) was the first African American female newscaster in San Francisco. Davis worked as anchor and urban affairs specialist for KRON 4, where she worked full time until 1999, when she became a special projects reporter for the television station. Davis also hosted and helped to create All Together Now, one of the country's first prime-time public affairs programs to focus on ethnic communities. Davis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 27, 2002, in San Francisco, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_033
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Broadcast journalist Belva Davis was born on October 13, 1932. She attended Berkeley High in Berkeley, California, graduating in 1951. She was accepted at San Francisco State University. However, her family could not afford the tuition, and Davis began working at the Naval Supply Center in Oakland.

Davis's first paid writing job was as a freelance writer for *Jet magazine*. She soon found work with several weekly black newspapers, including the *Bay Area Independent* and the *San Francisco Sun-Reporter*. Davis's career in broadcasting began at radio station KSAN, where she read newspaper clips on the air, becoming the first black female at KSAN. Davis left KSAN to work for another radio station, KDIA. Here she had a regular two-hour radio show which featured music, studio interviews and political coverage.

In 1966, Davis was hired to replace television news anchor Nancy Reynolds on KPIX-TV, San Francisco's CBS affiliate. This made Davis the first female African American television reporter on the west coast. Davis also hosted and helped to create *All Together Now*, one of the country's first prime-time public affairs programs to focus on ethnic communities. In 1977, left KPIX to work at the PBS affiliate in San Francisco, KQED. She anchored *A Closer Look* and then *Evening Edition* from 1977 to 1981. She next took a job as anchor and urban affairs specialist for KRON-4, where she worked full time until 1999, when she became a special projects reporter for the television station.

Davis has received countless awards for her contributions to the field of journalism. These awards include national recognition from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, San Francisco State University and the National Education Writers Association. She received the Northern California Chapter of National Academy of Television

Arts and Sciences' highest lifetime achievement award, the Governor's Award, in 1996. Davis is also well known for her work as a labor activist, vice president of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, and for being active within the community.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Belva Davis was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on March 27, 2002, in San Francisco, California, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Television anchor Belva Davis (1932 -) was the first African American female newscaster in San Francisco. Davis worked as anchor and urban affairs specialist for KRON 4, where she worked full time until 1999, when she became a special projects reporter for the television station. Davis also hosted and helped to create All Together Now, one of the country's first prime-time public affairs programs to focus on ethnic communities.

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:

- Davis, Belva, 1933-
- Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)
- Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

- African Americans--Interviews
 - Davis, Belva, 1933---Interviews
-

African American television personalities--California--Interviews.

African American television journalists--Interviews.

African American families--Louisiana.

African Americans--California--Berkeley--Social conditions.

San Francisco (Calif.)--Newspapers.

Divorce.

Discrimination in employment--California--San Francisco.

Interracial marriage.

Interviewing on television.

X, Malcolm, 1925-1965.

Newton, Huey P.

Kennedy, Robert F., 1925-1968.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Television Anchor

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Belva Davis, March 27, 2002. 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).

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 Belva Davis, Section A2002_033_001_001, TRT: 0:29:21 ?

Noted broadcast journalist Belva Davis describes her early childhood in Louisiana. Born to teen parents, Davis was raised by her maternal aunts, one of whom died while she was still young. An uncle's winning legal suit against Armour Meat Packing led to death threats and the eventual escape of the men of the family to California. The women and children joined them soon after and Davis details her new life in the Bay Area.

African American television personalities--California--Interviews.

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X, Malcolm, 1925-1965.

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Video Oral History Interview with Belva Davis, Section A2002_033_001_002, TRT: 0:29:23 ?

Belva Davis describes her life in Berkeley, California as a teen struggling against twin obstacles of racism and low income. Davis details her high school life where she felt the sting of segregation. Unable to afford college, Davis took a job at the Naval shipyard and quickly married and moved to Washington,

D.C., with her husband. Two children and a dissolved marriage later, Davis found herself writing items for Jet magazine then later, the Bay Area Independent.

Video Oral History Interview with Belva Davis, Section A2002_033_001_003, TRT: 0:30:03 ?

Journalist Belva Davis details her life as a single mother, struggling to raise two children on a freelancers salary. Her best friend, Bill Moore, became her second husband, and supported her efforts to become San Francisco's first black female TV news reporter. Davis encountered static, especially from her coworkers, some of whom resented her interracial marriage.

Video Oral History Interview with Belva Davis, Section A2002_033_001_004, TRT: 0:29:54 ?

Groundbreaking broadcast journalist, Belva Davis, discusses the heady atmosphere in broadcast journalism in the late 1960s. She describes the interactions in the field and behind the camers. Additionally, Davis recalls interviewing pivotal figures like Malcolm X, Huey Newton and Robert Kennedy. She also discusses some of the hurdles she had to overcome as a woman in the news business.

Video Oral History Interview with Belva Davis, Section A2002_033_001_005, TRT: 0:30:14 ?

San Francisco's first black woman braodcast journalist, Belva Davis, looks back at her career with great pride. She recalls her role in the promotion of the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, in particular. Davis offers advice for future black journalists, to go into the industry for love, not fame. She also shares some disappointments from her career as well.

Video Oral History Interview with Belva Davis, Section A2002_033_001_006, TRT: 0:20:26 ?

Belva Davis narrates her photographs.