

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Precious Lashley

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Lashley, Precious, 1926-2008
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Precious Lashley,
Dates:	July 16, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:51:05).
Abstract:	Fashion designer Precious Lashley (1926 - 2008) founded Precious, Inc., featuring ready-to-wear women's apparel. Lashley's designs soon became a routine feature in Fairchild Publications' fashion trade paper, Women's Wear Daily, Vogue and Ebony, as well as the Chicago press. Lashley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 16, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_102
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Award-winning fashion designer, manufacturer and teacher Precious Lashley set trends for women of style for more than forty years. A graduate of Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, Lashley began her career as a couture designer for private clients in the early 1950s. She went on to study design and manufacturing at Ray-Vogue College of Design in the early 1970s before founding Lynn Stuart's School of Dressmaking, which she named for her three children, Meryl Lynn, Iris Lynn and Robert Stuart. By 1973, Lashley was designing under her Lynn Stuart's label and producing annual fashion shows to showcase her designs as well as those of her students.

In 1978, after receiving a first place design award from the New York Couture Club, Lashley founded Precious, Inc., featuring ready-to-wear women's apparel. She presented her first collection under the Precious! label to upscale retailers at the Chicago Apparel Center. Marshall Field's, Carson Pirie Scott, Joseph Shoe Salon and J.C. Penney all carried the Precious! styles.

By the mid-1980s, Precious designs were a routine feature in Fairchild Publications' fashion trade paper, Women's Wear Daily, Vogue and Ebony, as well as local press, including The Chicago Tribune, The Chicago Sun-Times and The Defender. Lashley received honors for excellence in design from many organizations, including Provident Medical Center, Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center, Independence Bank, Robeson's of Champaign, Hadassah, South Suburban Chicago Links and Ebony Fashion Fair. Lashley retired in the early 1990s and occasionally taught design workshops at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Lashley passed away on October 14, 2008.

Lashley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 16, 2002.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Precious Lashley was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 16, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Fashion designer Precious Lashley (1926 - 2008) founded Precious, Inc., featuring ready-to-wear women's apparel. Lashley's designs soon became a routine feature in Fairchild Publications' fashion trade paper, Women's Wear Daily, Vogue and Ebony, as well as the Chicago press.

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:

Lashley, Precious, 1926-2008

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Lashley, Precious, 1926-2008--Interviews

African American fashion designers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Fashion Designer

HistoryMakers® Category:

StyleMakers

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 Precious Lashley, July 16, 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 Precious Lashley, Section A2002_102_001_001, TRT: 0:29:15 ?

Precious Lashley was born in 1926 in Birmingham, Alabama to Effie Mae Nathan, born in 1898 in Pike Road, Alabama, and William M. Carter from Batesville, South Carolina. She grew up in the all-black area Titusville on the South Side of Birmingham, Alabama, near the jail in which Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr. was imprisoned in 1963. Lashley had an older brother and sister and two younger brothers. Her mother was a domestic before becoming specialized in silk finishing, and her father worked for the L&N Railway Express. Lashley attended Booker T. Washington Elementary School, Ullman Junior High School and A.H. Parker High School Birmingham, Alabama, before attending Tuskegee University, in Alabama, like her father, her maternal uncles, and her older brother and sister. As a child, Lashley enjoyed window shopping in Birmingham, and she then learned to sew from her mother to create the designs she saw there. She met and married her husband, Robert Junious, at Tuskegee University, where he worked at the Tuskegee Air Base, before moving to Chicago, Illinois in 1948.

World War, 1939-1945--African Americans.

African American women--Social life and customs.

African American families--Alabama.

Tuskegee University.

Tuskegee Army Air Field (Ala.)--History.

Video Oral History Interview with Precious Lashley, Section A2002_102_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Precious Lashley grew up with four siblings in Birmingham, Alabama in the 1930s and 1940s. As a child, she enjoyed listening to the radio and describes her mother as strict with her and her siblings. After graduating from Tuskegee University in the 1940s and marrying her first husband, Robert Junious, Lashley moved to Chicago, where she found work during World War II at a uniform factory, before working at the U.S. Postal Service. While working these jobs, she continued to design and sew, selling her garments to her colleagues. By the 1970s, she opened Lynn Stuart's School for Dressmaking, and in 1973 she launched her Lynn Stuart fashion line. She made connections with designers like Harvé Benard and with Chicago's department Carson Pirie Scott and Champaign, Illinois department store, Robeson's. She designed for department stores as well as boutiques, becoming especially known for creating fashion for larger sizes.

World War, 1939-1945--African Americans.

Fashion design.

African American business people--History.

African American women--dressmaking--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Precious Lashley, Section A2002_102_001_003, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Precious Lashley began to design for Ebony Magazine fashion shows in the 1980s with the growth of her Precious Designs brand. Eunice Johnson, the founder of Ebony Magazine, published many of Lashley's designs, and asked her to show her work at Ebony's fashion shows. In 1978, she won an award from the New York Couture Club, followed by awards from Robeson's Department Store in Champaign, Illinois, and Chicago's first African American owned hospital, Provident Hospital. She taught in the 1990s at the University of Illinois in Chicago, and was a mentor with Chicago's Haute Couture Club. The Indigo Foundation has established the Precious Lashley Scholarship Fund for young design students. Lashley reflects on an influential garment she created for Ebony in the 1980s, for the year 2000, and she reflects on her legacy and how she wants to be remembered.

Fashion design.

Fashion design--Competitions--Exhibitions.

African American women--Fashion designers--20th century.

African American women--dressmaking--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Precious Lashley, Section A2002_102_001_004, TRT: 0:21:40 ?

This tape includes a review of photographs.