

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ruth Love

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Love, Ruth B.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ruth Love,
Dates:	July 3, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:29:53).
Abstract:	Education advisor and school superintendent Ruth Love (1932 - 2022) served as the director of the National Right to Read Program, creating reading and literacy programs for children and adults. She then went on to serve as superintendent in the Oakland and Chicago public schools systems. Love was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 3, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_103
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Eminent educator Ruth Love was born on April 22, 1932 in Lawton, Oklahoma. As a child, Love's favorite game was playing school. One does not have to delve deeply into Love's family tree to uncover the roots of her passion for education. Her grandfather Andrew A. Williams, a former slave, founded Lawton's first school for African Americans. Williams' achievements instilled in Love a passion for reading, which she parlayed into a lifelong educational career. Love received her B.A. in Education in 1954 from San Jose University. She went on to receive her M.A. in Guidance and Counseling from San Francisco State University in 1961. In 1971, Love was awarded her Ph.D. in Human Behavior and Psychology from the United States International University, San Diego.

Love began her career in education as a teacher in the Oakland Public Schools. In conjunction with her duties, Love immersed herself in numerous educational projects taking her across the globe to Ghana and England as a Fulbright Exchange Educator. Love assisted in drafting important education legislation, specifically the National Reading Act. She accepted an appointment as Director of the National Right to Read Program. After four years with the program, she took a position as the Superintendent of Schools in the Oakland Unified School District. During her seven-year tenure as Superintendent, she made an indelible mark on the Oakland School system. Two of Love's programs "Scholars and Artists" and "Face the Students" brought such African Americans of achievement as Alex Haley, Maya Angelou, James Baldwin and Coretta Scott King to motivate and inform students. Love was then the first woman recruited to head up Chicago's Public School system.

Love was the founder and president of RBL Enterprises, LTD., an educational consulting company. She also authored several articles and books including Hello World (1975), taught courses in Education Administration at San Francisco State University, and spoke and lectured to educational leaders around the world. Her audiences were global, but her professional interests remained local. She strived for the reform and improvement of education in urban American schools.

Ruth Love was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 3, 2002.

Love passed away on June 2, 2022 at the age of 80.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ruth Love was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on July 3, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Education advisor and school superintendent Ruth Love (1932 - 2022) served as the director of the National Right to Read Program, creating reading and literacy programs for children and adults. She then went on to serve as superintendent in the Oakland and Chicago public schools systems.

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:

Love, Ruth B.

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Love, Ruth B. --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Oakland Unified School District

Occupations:

Education Advisor

School Superintendent

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 Ruth Love, July 3, 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 Ruth Love, Section A2002_103_001_001, TRT: 0:30:15 ?

Ruth Love describes her family background. Her mother, Burnett Love, was born in Lawton Oklahoma. Love's maternal grandfather, Andrew A. Williams, was a slave who escaped to freedom and helped to found Langston University in Oklahoma. Her father, Alvin Love was born near Tishomingo, Oklahoma. His grandmother was of Indian Cherokee descent. When Love was a child, her family moved from Oklahoma to Bakersfield, California in pursuit of better opportunities. Other than the great expanse of California, she has few memories of the move. As a young girl, Love was a quiet child and an avid reader. She learned to express herself over time. During her freshman year at Bakersfield High School, her mother played a pivotal role in her educational pathway by fighting to place Love in courses designed for those on the college track. Love describes memories of her childhood with four siblings as well as the sounds and smells of her childhood.

Video Oral History Interview with Ruth Love, Section A2002_103_001_002, TRT: 0:29:55 ?

Ruth Love grew up in Bakersfield, California, a diverse, yet largely segregated community. She attended Lincoln Elementary School in Bakersfield where she thrived under the instruction of Miss Fray, her favorite teacher. Love inherited a love of reading from her mother who encouraged her children to go to the library and to read books about accomplished African Americans like George Washington Carver. Love's family were members of an integrated Church of God congregation although they did not follow all of their rules. As a child, many of Love's social activities were at the local YMCA where she learned healthy grooming, dancing, and speech-making. Love graduated from Bakersfield High School in 1954. Her last-minute decision to attend San Jose State University was heavily influenced by her parents and her history teacher. Love talks about her college experience and adjusting to life away from home. She also shares her childhood memories of family road trips from California to Oklahoma to visit relatives.

Video Oral History Interview with Ruth Love, Section A2002_103_001_003, TRT: 0:31:05 ?

Ruth Love skipped two grades in elementary school. She talks about how her family environment and her childhood in Bakersfield, California prepared her for her role as the general superintendent of Chicago Public Schools. Love discusses the implications of Brown vs. Board of education, her engagement with The Civil Rights Movement, and her admiration of A. Philip Randolph. After graduating from Bakersfield High School in 1954, Love became a Fulbright Exchange Scholar. Although she wanted to go to Africa to learn about her ancestry and to visit Liberia, the Fulbright Program did not have any programs on the continent. She ended up in England. Love talks about her teacher exchange program in England and the effects it had on her. Love also spent six weeks traveling to Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Upon returning to the States, Love worked with Wilson Riles, the first black superintendent in the State of California, to establish educational programs for minority kids. Their programs were adopted nationally.

Video Oral History Interview with Ruth Love, Section A2002_103_001_004, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Ruth Love describes her work as an educational administrator. While working for the State of California in the 1960s, Love addressed education inequity through reforms like small group instruction, teacher inservice, and community homework programs. In 1971, she began directing the national Right-To-Read Program for the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C. Her experience in the nation's capital helped to prepare her for her next role as the

superintendent of public schools in Oakland, California. Arriving in Oakland after the assassination of Marcus Carter, Love sought improvements. She motivated schools by inviting dynamic speakers like Alex Haley, Coretta Scott King, James Baldwin, and Rosalynn Carter. In 1981, Love became the general superintendent of Chicago Public Schools despite opposition to her appointment from HistoryMaker Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sr. Love describes the state of the Chicago Public School system upon her arrival and significant political players during her tenure including Mayors Jane Margaret Byrne and Harold Washington.

Video Oral History Interview with Ruth Love, Section A2002_103_001_005, TRT: 0:28:08 ?

Ruth Love describes working with Chicago politicians like Mayors Jane Margaret Byrne and Harold Washington. She also describes her experiences of racial and gender discrimination while working as the general superintendent of Chicago Public Schools from 1981 to 1984. Love talks about systematic problems faced by urban schools, the current state of public education, disparity in schools, charter schools, and potential avenues for education reform. In 1987, Love started her own educational consulting company, RBL Enterprises, LTD. in Chicago. Love reflects upon her legacy, her accomplishments, her mother's support, and her hopes for the future. She is proud of her role in improving student performance across the nation.