

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Kathleen Crosby

---

## 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>	Crosby, Kathleen, 1925-2005
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Kathleen Crosby,
<b>Dates:</b>	December 4, 2002
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2002
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:22:56).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Elementary school teacher and school superintendent Kathleen Crosby (1925 - 2012 ) was an active desegregation advocate and the former superintendent of the Charlotte/Mecklenberg School District in North Carolina. Crosby was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 4, 2002, in Charlotte, North Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2002_216
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator Kathleen "Kat" Crosby was born on March 9, 1925, in Winnsboro, South Carolina, to Beatrice Tucker and W.A. Ross. She graduated from Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, with a B.A. in 1946 and later earned her M.A. from Bank Street College in New York City in 1970.

Crosby began teaching in 1946 in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. Aside from twenty years of experience as a classroom teacher, she served as an in-service specialist for early childhood education from 1967 to 1970. Crosby worked at length with Head Start programs and has offered her services as an education consultant at the university level. From 1970 to 1976, Crosby was principal of Billingsville Elementary School. There, she was hailed for her successful leadership in dealing with school desegregation and busing issues. A 1976 CBS television documentary highlighted her outstanding leadership of Billingsville Elementary School. In 1976, Crosby became an area assistant superintendent to the district, which comprised twenty-five schools. She retired as superintendent in 1986 after a successful forty-year career.

In 1970, Crosby was appointed to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Charter Commission. An outspoken voice on desegregation, Crosby was named WBT Radio's Woman of the Year 1976. In 1977, she was appointed to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors. Crosby has served as vice president of the United Community Service Board and on the Community Relations Committee, the University of North Carolina's Board of Trustees, the Drug Education Board, WBT Radio's Black Advisory Board and the Board of Trustees for Johnson C. Smith University. In 1974, she was awarded the B'nai B'rith Women's Human Relations Award, and in 1975 she was inducted into the NAACP's Hall of Fame.

Her husband of fifty-one years, Joseph Crosby, died in June 2001. They have two children, Joseph Crosby, Jr. and Kathy Wells.

Kathleen Crosby passed away on November 13, 2012.

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Kathleen Crosby was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 4, 2002, in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Elementary school teacher and school superintendent Kathleen Crosby (1925 - 2012 ) was an active desegregation advocate and the former superintendent of the Charlotte/Mecklenberg School District in North Carolina.

---

## 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:

Crosby, Kathleen, 1925-2005

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Crosby, Kathleen, 1925-2005--Interviews

---

## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

---

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

---

### Occupations:

Elementary School Teacher

---

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 Kathleen Crosby, December 4, 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 Kathleen Crosby, Section A2002\_216\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:31 ?

Kathleen Crosby was born on March 9, 1925 in Winnsboro, South Carolina to Beatrice and W.A. Ross, Sr. Her mother was born in Union County, South Carolina and became a school teacher. Crosby remembers her mother as a kind and caring woman. Crosby's father was born in York County, South Carolina; he attended the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia and taught at Friendship College in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The Rosses raised their six children in Winnsboro, South Carolina. Crosby's parents did not discuss their family background. As a young girl, Crosby enjoyed playing hopscotch and basketball. Crosby describes her siblings and her childhood home. In addition to their studies and their chores, Crosby and her siblings also learned to love poetry. Crosby recites poetry including excerpts from works by her favorite poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar.

Video Oral History Interview with Kathleen Crosby, Section A2002\_216\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:35 ?

Kathleen Crosby laments the decline of poetry in schools today. She describes her grade schools years where she was an average student who occasionally got in trouble. In fact, a teacher once pulled Crosby's chair from under her in response to her impertinence. Crosby shares anecdotes about Ms. Cutsy, a role model from church as a young girl. She attended Fairfield County Training School in Winnsboro, South Carolina, which was built by Julius Rosenwald. In high school, she played basketball, performed in talent shows, and saw movies at a segregated theater. As a student at Johnson C. Smith College in Charlotte, North Carolina, Crosby's theatrical talent was recognized with an award. During the interview, she re-enacts her award-winning scene from "Sadie at the Movie." Crosby talks about her brothers and her parents, who placed a high value on education. She also describes her memories of Winnsboro, Carolina including the Manigaults, a wealthy family in town, and an experience of racial discrimination.

Video Oral History Interview with Kathleen Crosby, Section A2002\_216\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:15 ?

Kathleen Crosby attended Voorhees Junior College in Denmark, South Carolina before transferring to Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina where she graduated in 1946. She met her husband Joseph C. Crosby in the ninth grade. Crosby recounts the story of their courtship. The Crosbys married in 1948 and settled in Charlotte, North Carolina. During that time, Crosby's ex-boyfriend committed suicide. Crosby started teaching at Pineville Colored High School in 1946. From 1957 to 1967 she taught at Lincoln Heights Elementary School. Crosby then trained teachers in early childhood education. She talks about the conditions behind Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education including Dorothy Counts' attempted integration of Harding High School in 1957. The lawsuit was filed by HistoryMaker Julius Chambers. After Billingsville Elementary School's desegregation in 1971, Crosby was appointed principal by Charlotte-Mecklenburg superintendent, Jay Robinson. Well-received by students and teachers, she was appointed area superintendent in 1976. Crosby describes how she responded to a teacher's attempt to remove poor students from the classroom.

Video Oral History Interview with Kathleen Crosby, Section A2002\_216\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Kathleen Crosby was interviewed by Charles Collingwood at CBS for a "60 Minutes" segment on integration in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in 1976. Crosby recalls incidents of hate and racial discrimination in Charlotte, North Carolina initiated by the Ku Klux Klan. During the fight to integrate Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the homes of Reginald Hawkins, NAACP president Kelly Miller Alexander, and HistoryMaker Julius Chambers were bombed. Crosby and

her family were also targeted by the KKK. From 1976 to 1986, Crosby was an area superintendent over Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. She reflects upon her hopes and concerns for the African American community, her legacy, her parents' pride and support, and how she would like to be remembered. Crosby also discusses issues affecting the quality of education today.

Video Oral History Interview with Kathleen Crosby, Section A2002\_216\_001\_005, TRT: 0:22:25 ?

Kathleen Crosby narrates her photographs.