

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Benita Fitzgerald Mosley

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Mosley, Benita Fitzgerald, 1961-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Benita Fitzgerald Mosley,
Dates:	January 22, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:26:22).
Abstract:	Track and field athlete and nonprofit executive Benita Fitzgerald Mosley (1961 -) was an award-winning hurdler in the 1980s, winning two Olympic gold metals, in addition to a number of other prestigious awards. After the end of her career in hurdling, Mosley went on to have a successful career in sports marketing and administration. Mosley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 22, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_012
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Olympian and marketing executive Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, a native of Dale City, Virginia, graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1984 with her degree in industrial engineering; she won a gold medal in the 100-meter hurdles in the Olympic Games the same year. Mosley was an athlete on the United States Olympic Teams of 1980 and 1984, and an alternate for the 1988 team; during her athletic career, she was the second American, and the only African American woman at that time to have won an Olympic gold medal in the 100-meter hurdles. Mosley went on to become a fifteen-time All-American; an eight-time national champion; and a gold medalist in the 1983 Pan American Games.

In 1985, Mosley began an engineering career as a computer software and hardware systems developer for defense contractors. After six years in this field, Mosley switched her career to sports marketing and administration, becoming a regional director for Special Olympics International in Washington, D.C. From 1993 to 1995, Mosley served as program director for the marketing division of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. In 1995, Mosley began working for the United States Olympic Committee as the director of the ARCO Olympic Training Center in San Diego; from 1997 until 2000, she served as the USOC's director of Olympic training centers. In March 2001, Mosley was appointed president of Women in Cable and Telecommunications, and *Cablefax* ranked her fiftieth on its annual list of the 100 most influential executives in the industry.

Mosley was inducted into both the Virginia High School Hall of Fame, and the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame; she was named Sportswoman of the Century by *The Potomac News* and ranked twelfth on a list of the Top 50 Sports Figures of the Century from Virginia by *Sports Illustrated*. *Track and Field News* named Mosley Hurdler of the Decade for the 1980s, and in 1996 the United States Sports Academy named her its Distinguished Service Award winner. Additionally, in 1996, Mosley was one of the eight U.S. Olympians chosen to carry the Olympic Flag into the stadium during the Atlanta Olympic Games opening ceremony.

Mosely married Ron Mosley, with whom she had a son, Isaiah.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Benita Fitzgerald Mosley was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 22, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Track and field athlete and nonprofit executive Benita Fitzgerald Mosley (1961 -) was an award-winning hurdler in the 1980s, winning two Olympic gold metals, in addition to a number of other prestigious awards. After the end of her career in hurdling, Mosley went on to have a successful career in sports marketing and administration.

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:

Mosley, Benita Fitzgerald, 1961-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Mosley, Benita Fitzgerald, 1961---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Track and Field Athlete

HistoryMakers® Category:

SportsMakers

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 Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, January 22, 2003. 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 Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, Section A2003_012_001_001, TRT: 0:31:08 ?

Benita Mosley describes her family background. Mosley was born on July 6, 1961 in Fauquier County, Virginia. Her mother, Fannie Wilkinson Fitzgerald, was born to Lavennia, a homemaker who had eleven children, and Isaiah

Wilkinson, a minister. Her father, Rodger Fitzgerald was born to Gertrude and David J. Fitzgerald, a minister at the first African Baptist Church in the United States. Her father served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War, attended Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia and became a teacher and guidance counselor at Gar-Field Senior High School. Mosley's father encouraged her to major in engineering and provided many cultural outings to Washington, D.C. museums. Mosley's mother attended Virginia Union University and Columbia's Teachers College in New York City before becoming one of the first African American teachers to integrate schools in Prince William County, Virginia. Mosley shares her happy childhood memories of playing outdoors.

Video Oral History Interview with Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, Section A2003_012_001_002, TRT: 0:31:12 ?

Benita Mosley talks about her childhood and the start of her track career. As a child, Mosley was teased by other black children for dressing and talking properly. Her parents had strict rules, instilled discipline, and encouraged their children's involvement in sports, music, and academic excellence. Mosley had an amiable childhood personality, played softball, participated in gymnastics, and played the flute. Mosley knew that she was a fast runner because she beat the neighborhood boys in races, but she did not join a track team until she was recruited by the middle school track coach Gwen Washington. At Gar-Field Senior High School in Dale City, Virginia, track coach Ruthie Brown took a special interest in developing Mosley's hurdling talent and took her to track meets all over the country. Mosley was inspired by Olympic track athlete Paula Girven who attended her high school and was a few years older than her. Mosley won the Track and Field Junior National Championship in 1978 and then competed in Russia.

Video Oral History Interview with Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, Section A2003_012_001_003, TRT: 0:31:02 ?

Benita Mosley describes her track competitions in high school and college. After winning the Junior National Championship in 1978, Mosley competed in Russia and when the American track team won, the Russians returned with an older, different team later that week. During her senior year of high school, Mosley improved her hurdling time enough to make the 1980 Olympic team. However, President Jimmy Carter had already decided to boycott the Olympics so Mosley did not get to compete that year. Although Mosley was recruited by sixty-five universities, she decided to attend the University of Tennessee in Knoxville due to her familiarity with the coach and the strength of the women's athletic program. Mosley relied on her self-discipline and a five year graduation plan to maintain her track career and a rigorous engineering curriculum. Mosley talks about the importance of having a well-rounded life and how she saw many of her teammates succumb to overtraining and outside pressures.

Video Oral History Interview with Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, Section A2003_012_001_004, TRT: 0:31:07 ?

Benita talks about her Olympic experiences. Mosley was a fifteen-time All-American; an eight-time national champion; and a gold medalist in the 1983 Pan American Games. Between 1980 and 1983, Mosley's athleticism and self-confidence improved greatly. In 1984, she graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in industrial engineering, married her first husband, and became the second American and first African American woman to win a gold medal in the 100-meter hurdles. In 1984, Eastern Europe boycotted the Olympics that were held in Los Angeles, California. Mosley believes that the

racers were fairer without athletes from Eastern Europe who used performance enhancing drugs. Mosley comments on controversies surrounding race, gender, and international politics that have affected the Olympic games. She worked as an engineer part-time while training. A series of injuries in the mid-1980s affected her ability to compete, and she was an alternate for the 1988 Olympic team.

Video Oral History Interview with Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, Section A2003_012_001_005, TRT: 0:21:53 ?

Benita Mosley describes her post-Olympics career. In 1985, Mosley began her engineering career as a computer software and hardware systems developer for defense contractors. After six years in this field, Mosley switched her career to sports marketing and administration, becoming a regional director for Special Olympics International in Washington, D.C. From 1993 to 1995, Mosley served as program director for the marketing division of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. In 1995, Mosley began working for the United States Olympic Committee as the director of the ARCO Olympic Training Center in San Diego. From 1997 until 2000, she served as the USOC's director of Olympic training centers. In March 2001, Mosley was appointed president of Women in Cable and Telecommunications. Mosley talks about her future plans, her hopes for the black community, her parents' pride in her accomplishments, and gives advice to young female athletes. Mosley concludes by reflecting upon her legacy.