

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Tucker, Sylvia, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker,
Dates:	July 19, 2004 and October 11, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	12 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:57:15).
Abstract:	Chaplain Chaplain Sylvia Tucker (1945 -) was appointed Chaplain of John Randolph Medical Center, making her the first female African American hospital chaplain in the state of Virginia. Tucker was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 19, 2004 and October 11, 2004, in Hopewell, Virginia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_096
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Sylvia Voncill Tucker was born on June 20, 1945 in Melbourne, Florida. Her father was a presser and her mother worked as a domestic. Her parents separated at an early age and she and her siblings were raised by their father in Melbourne. She was very sickly as a child and suffered from severe asthmatic attacks. As a young girl she had dreams of becoming a nurse. She graduated from Stone High School in 1963, where she was active in the homemakers club and the social action club.

After graduation she married and was a homemaker from 1963 until 1978. Her husband was a member of the United States Air Force, and they traveled the world, living in Greece, Japan and several U.S. cities. In 1978, she entered the workforce, becoming a financial advisor at First Merchants Bank in Richmond, Virginia. She continued her financial counseling work at John Randolph Medical Center in Hopewell, Virginia from 1983 until 1995. In 1979, she also became active with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Virginia and created the *Miss SCLC Pageant* for young female members of the organization. In 1982, after raising her four children, she went back to college and earned her degree in theology at the University of Lynchburg Seminary. In 1994, she was ordained and licensed as a Baptist minister.

In 1985, while still working in the finance department at John Randolph Medical Center she was given the opportunity to pursue her ministry full time, when she was appointed Chaplain of the hospital thus making history as she was the first female African American hospital chaplain in the state of Virginia.

Tucker continued to add to her list of firsts, in 2000 she was appointed the SCLC National Chaplain, and was the first woman to hold the post. As a hospital chaplain she has dedicated newborn babies, married ill couples, and comforted countless families and sick patients.

Tucker resides in Disputanta, Virginia with her husband, Raymond and they have four grown children and four grandchildren.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on July 19, 2004 and October 11, 2004, in Hopewell, Virginia, and was recorded on 12 Betacame SP videocassettes. Chaplain Chaplain Sylvia Tucker (1945 -) was appointed Chaplain of John Randolph Medical Center, making her the first female African American hospital chaplain in the state of Virginia.

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:

Tucker, Sylvia, 1945-

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Tucker, Sylvia, 1945---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Chaplain

HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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 Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, July 19, 2004 and October 11, 2004. 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 Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section A2004_096_002_001, TRT: 0:30:11 ?

Chaplain Sylvia Tucker talks about her family and growing up in Melbourne, Florida. Tucker was born June 20, 1945 in Melbourne, Florida, the daughter of Wilhelmina Scott Smith and Sylvester Kelsey. Her mother was a domestic worker of mixed parentage. Her father, also of mixed parentage and part Seminole Indian, worked as a presser for a dry cleaners in Melbourne. Tucker

describes the discrimination that her father faced in his youth. She describes him as very caring. When she was a child, her parents divorced and she helped to raise her younger siblings. Tucker describes spending time with her maternal grandparents, as well as the family-owned orange groves and her problems with asthma growing up. Tucker describes the sights, sounds, and smells of Melbourne, as well as her experience attending first to twelfth grade at Stone High School, a segregated school in Melbourne. She talks about her religious upbringing, her junior high years, and her high school prom where her date was future husband, Raymond Tucker.

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section A2004_096_002_002, TRT: 0:30:18 ?

Chaplain Sylvia Tucker recalls her experience at Stone High School in Melbourne, Florida and her English, homemaking, and history classes. Though she wanted to attend college, she was unable to afford it. After graduating from high school, she married Raymond Tucker who was in the U.S. Air Force. They lived abroad in Japan and Greece. From 1963 to 1978, Tucker worked as a homemaker and raised four children. She also became active in the Civil Rights movement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) where she initiated the Miss SCLA pageant. In the late 1970s, she was hired to work at Merchant's Bank in Virginia. Shortly after, she was hired at John Randolph Medical Center in Hopewell, Virginia where she also pursued a degree in theology at the Virginia University of Lynchburg. Tucker reflects on her desire to be a chaplain and lack of African Americans in the role of hospital chaplains. She also talks about her role as the first woman to become chaplain of the national board of the SCLC.

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section A2004_096_002_003, TRT: 0:28:38 ?

Chaplain Sylvia Tucker reflects on the resistance of African American men to African American women in the ministry, which affects the level and status of those in the ministry despite education and training. She reflects on her role as a hospital chaplain and how she is well-suited to do this work. The days are long and full of helping those who are dealing with death and illness. Tucker offers advice to those who would like to enter chaplain ministry. She talks about Nelson Mandela, problems within the black church, the importance of education for young African Americans, voting apathy and voter rights, and her memories of the Civil Rights Movement. She also reflects upon her life and how she would like to be remembered. She concludes by offering advice to her children and grandchildren.

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section A2004_096_002_004, TRT: 0:11:34 ?

Chaplain Sylvia Tucker narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section B2004_096_001_001, TRT: 0:30:43 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section B2004_096_001_001E, TRT: 0:30:43 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section B2004_096_001_002, TRT: 0:29:42 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section B2004_096_001_002E, TRT: 0:29:42 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section B2004_096_001_003, TRT:

0:29:53 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section B2004_096_001_003E, TRT:
0:29:53 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section B2004_096_001_004, TRT:
0:07:59 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Chaplain Sylvia Tucker, Section B2004_096_001_004E, TRT:
0:07:59 ?