

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Judith M. Davenport

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Davenport, Judith M., 1939-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Judith M. Davenport,
Dates:	August 20, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:30:58).
Abstract:	Dentist Dr. Judith M. Davenport (1939 -) co-founded the Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation, which began with four radio stations, and has expanded to include the American Urban Radio Network, with 400 affiliates around the country. Davenport was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 20, 2004, in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_136
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Dentist Judith Marylyn Davenport was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on August 10, 1939. After graduating from Taylor-Allderdice High School, Davenport attended Penn State University, earning her B.S. degree in 1961. Davenport continued her education several years later, earning a master's of public health in 1973 and then a doctorate of dental medicine degree in 1979, both from the University of Pittsburgh.

While earning her M.P.H, Davenport focused on low-income dental programs, and this furthered her desire to become a dentist. After completing her D.M.D., Davenport opened her own private practice in 1982, where she continued to practice until she retired in 2000. As a dentist, Davenport was featured in Fred Rogers' *Going to the Dentist*, as well as the video *Women in Dentistry*. In addition, she and her husband, Ronald Davenport, Sr., founded the Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation in 1973. Starting with four radio stations, now the corporation's holdings include the American Urban Radio Network, with 400 affiliates around the country.

Since her retirement from dentistry, Davenport has remained active on a number of committees in the community. She serves as a trustee of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, the Andy Warhol Museum, the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and the Pittsburgh Public Theater, among others. She is also the chair of the board of directors for Carlow College and is on the Washington Regional Selection Panel for the President's Commission on White House Fellowships. Some of her many awards include the Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania Award and the Distinguished Alumna Award from Pennsylvania State University.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Judith M. Davenport was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 20, 2004, in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Dentist Dr. Judith M. Davenport

(1939 -) co-founded the Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation, which began with four radio stations, and has expanded to include the American Urban Radio Network, with 400 affiliates around the country.

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:

Davenport, Judith M., 1939-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Davenport, Judith M., 1939---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Dentist

HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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 Dr. Judith M. Davenport, August 20, 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 Dr. Judith M. Davenport, Section A2004_136_001_001, TRT: 0:29:17 ?

Dr. Judith M. Davenport was born on August 10, 1939 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her mother, Thelma McMullen Loftin, was a cook for the catering company she started with Davenport's father, Joseph W. Loftin. Davenport's mother grew up in a large family that moved often until settling in Akron, Ohio. Davenport's maternal grandfather attended Livingstone College and Boston University School of Law, helped found the NAACP in Akron and was a minister in the A.M.E. Zion church who was rejected from the bishopric for his activism. Davenport's maternal grandmother traced her lineage to the time of the American Revolution. She was accepted to the Daughters of the American Revolution but was turned away from their luncheon once the other members saw her. She also lost her savings in the Stock Market Crash of 1929.

Davenport's father worked as a Pullman porter and in the aircraft division of U.S. Steel. His maternal grandmother was Cherokee. Davenport grew up in Pittsburgh with her older sister and a younger brother.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Judith M. Davenport, Section A2004_136_001_002, TRT: 0:30:42 ?

Dr. Judith M. Davenport's parents met at A.M.E. Zion Church in Akron, Ohio. They married, after overcoming Davenport's maternal grandmother's initial disapproval, and moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania during the Great Depression. Davenport's father worked for U.S. Steel until he was laid off and became a Pullman porter. Davenport's earliest memory is learning to read, and she remembers Christmas, the smell of hot rolls, and playing board games and reading on rainy days. She was a prim and prissy child who was very serious about school. She attended the integrated Burgwin Elementary School, and enjoyed going to the library, listening to 'Your Hit Parade' on the radio, and attending church on Sundays. She grew up in Glen Hazel Heights housing project, and her family was among the first living there. Her role models included her maternal grandmother, who was biased against African American colleges in the South. Davenport explains how her maternal family records were lost after her grandmother's death.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Judith M. Davenport, Section A2004_136_001_003, TRT: 0:30:16 ?

Dr. Judith M. Davenport attended Gladstone Middle School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where she enjoyed English and math class. Outside of school, she participated in spelling bees, sports and appeared on the 'Howdy Doody' show doing gymnastics. Davenport went to Taylor Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where she found friends, many of them Jewish, who enjoyed studying as much as she did. She faced prejudice from the school administration which did not want to recognize her academic achievement. Although she had a scholarship to Chatham University, Davenport struck a compromise with her parents to instead attend Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pennsylvania. Davenport remembers the freedom she felt, her classmates at Penn State and her externship with a Ph.D. student. She describes her mother's attempt to earn money for her children's education by first applying to be a disc jockey and then creating Loftin Party Service, her parent's catering company.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Judith M. Davenport, Section A2004_136_001_004, TRT: 0:30:45 ?

Dr. Judith M. Davenport and her husband, HistoryMaker Ronald Davenport, met while attending Pennsylvania State University. After he graduated from law school, they moved back to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he taught at Duquesne University. Davenport was a homemaker during her children's early years, then decided to attend the University Of Pittsburgh Graduate School Of Public Health. She was inspired to go to dental school while completing her thesis on a dental health program at Allegheny General Hospital. She was accepted to the University Of Pittsburgh School Of Dental Medicine but first had to endure a sexist incident where the dean implied that he would not admit her without her husband's consent. In dental school, Davenport continued to experience sexism and racism, but with the help of her study group and a mentor, she graduated in 1979. She then worked at several Pittsburgh dental practices before opening her own in 1982. She describes highlights of her career and the evolution of the profession.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Judith M. Davenport, Section A2004_136_001_005, TRT:

0:29:58 ?

Dr. Judith M. Davenport and her husband, HistoryMaker Ronald Davenport, founded Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation as a means of acquiring an independent source of income in 1972. Davenport's husband eventually took over the business while she continued to focus on her career in dentistry. Davenport also volunteered with, and served on the boards, of several community organizations, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Davenport describes the advancements that have been made in dentistry, specifically with immediate dentures. She talks about the availability of affordable dentistry through dental schools and clinics, and the challenges that recent dental school graduates face. Davenport explains dental issues common among African Americans, her father's interest in dentistry and why she chose to attend dental school over medical school. Davenport describes her concerns for the African American community and how she would like to be remembered. She also reflects upon her life and legacy.