

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Cora Masters Barry

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Masters Barry, Cora, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry,
Dates:	January 26, 2023, June 16, 2012 and May 6, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005, 2012 and 2023
Physical Description:	12 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (6:00:14).
Abstract:	Civic leader and Cora Masters Barry (1945-), as the First Lady of the District of Columbia, founded the Recreation Wish List Committee in 1995 and the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center in 2001, and co-organized the “Women for the Million Man March.” Barry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 26, 2023, June 16, 2012 and May 6, 2005, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_121
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civic leader and professor Cora Masters Barry was born on May 7, 1945 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Isabell and Alfred Masters. She graduated from Paseo Academy in Kansas City, Missouri in 1962. Barry briefly attended Pasadena City College and Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri before graduating from Texas Southern University with her B.A. degree in 1969. She subsequently earned her M.A. degree in urban studies and public administration from Howard University in 1972.

In 1971, Barry began working on Walter Fauntroy's congressional campaign where she first met Marion Barry, whom she married in 1994. In 1976, Barry began teaching political science at the University of the District of Columbia, where she specialized in teaching “Black Politics, Comparative Political Studies, the Presidency, and the Constitution.” She was later hired as the northern Virginia minority coordinator for President Jimmy Carter's reelection campaign in 1980. That same year, Marion Barry, then mayor of Washington D.C., appointed her to the District of Columbia's Boxing and Wrestling Commission, making her the first woman in the United States to hold such a position. She later became chairwoman of the commission. Barry later ran a voter registration drive for Marion Barry's 1994 re-election campaign and chaired his inaugural committee. As First Lady of the District of Columbia, Barry founded the Recreation Wish List Committee (RWLC) in 1995 to support recreational activities and provide a nurturing learning environment for underserved youth in Washington D.C. That same year, she, with Dr. Dorothy I. Height, co-organized the “Women for the Million Man March.” In 2001, she founded the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center, a premier tennis and education facility.

Throughout her career, Barry has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the DC Chamber of Commerce Community Impact Award, being named the 2013 Washingtonian of the Year by Washingtonian Magazine, the USTA Founders Award, and the National Recreation and Park Association's Robert Artz Citizen Advocacy Award. She was also inducted into the USTA's Mid-Atlantic Tennis and Education Foundation's Hall of Fame and

the Black Tennis Hall of Fame.

Cora Masters Barry was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 6, 2005 and June 16, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Cora Masters Barry was conducted by Evelyn Pounds and Larry Crowe on January 26, 2023, June 16, 2012 and May 6, 2005, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 12 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Civic leader and Cora Masters Barry (1945-), as the First Lady of the District of Columbia, founded the Recreation Wish List Committee in 1995 and the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center in 2001, and co-organized the “Women for the Million Man March.”

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:

Masters Barry, Cora, 1945-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Pounds, Evelyn (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Masters Barry, Cora, 1945---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civic Leader

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Cora Masters Barry, January 26, 2023, June 16, 2012 and May 6, 2005. 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 Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_001_001, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Cora Masters Barry was born on May 7, 1945 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Her mother, Isabell Masters, was born on January 9, 1913 in Oklahoma. Isabell Masters spent her childhood in Oklahoma City and Topeka, Kansas. Barry talks about her maternal great-grandparents' migration west. One set of grandparents left Texas and moved to Kansas as part of the Exodus of 1879. The other set fled Montgomery, Alabama for Oklahoma. Barry's father, Alfred Masters, was born in Oklahoma, and enlisted in the U.S. Marines in World War II. Barry describes her father's experience with racism in the Marine Corps. Barry's parents met at Langston University in Oklahoma. When Barry was four or five years old, Barry's mother moved the family to Los Angeles, California. Her mother took pride in blockbusting and Barry was raised in a series of predominantly white suburbs of Los Angeles. Comedian Tim Moore of 'Amos 'n' Andy' was a neighbor. She describes her experience at Cienega Elementary and William A. Diggs Elementary in Los Angeles.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_001_002, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Cora Masters Barry describes her neighbor, comedian Tim Moore who played Kingfish on the 'Amos 'n' Andy' show. Barry was raised in a predominantly white neighborhood in Pasadena, California. She attended Samuel Gompers Middle School in South Central, California and Washington Junior High in Pasadena where the student body was racially diverse, but only 10 percent African American. Barry attended three high schools: John Muir in Pasadena, Manual Arts in Los Angeles, California, and Paseo Academy High School in Kansas City, Missouri in 1961. At all of the schools, though integrated, the student activities and social life were segregated. Barry graduated from Peso Academy in 1962, and enrolled briefly at Pasadena City College in California where she did poorly. In 1964, her mother sent her to Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. She partied a lot at Lincoln University and left prematurely for a job as a teacher's assistant in California's Head Start pilot program.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_001_003, TRT: 0:28:01 ?

Cora Masters Barry describes her first semester at Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas including the influence of black-nationalism, the 1968 on-campus shooting of unarmed students that ended in the death of a police officer, and the atmosphere after Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot. After graduating from TSU in 1969, Barry moved to Hayward, California to attend the University of California East Bay. She talks about the Black Power Movement in Northern California, the arrest of Black Panther chief of staff David Hilliard in 1969 and anti-war demonstrations in Berkley, California between 1968 and 1969. Barry moved to Washington, D.C. and earned her M.A. degree in urban policy from Howard University in 1972. Barry joined HistoryMaker Walter Fauntroy's congressional campaign in 1971, where she first met HistoryMaker Marion Barry. Barry worked with the National Council of Negro Women, and on Marion Barry's campaign for the Washington D.C. school board.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_001_004, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Cora Masters Barry talks about the election of HistoryMaker Walter Fauntroy as the delegate-elect for Washington D.C. congressional representation in 1971 and

explains the Home Rule Act of 1973 which gave the people of D.C. the power to elect their local politicians. In 1974, she was the coordinator for the committee to draft HistoryMaker Marion Barry for chairman of Washington D.C. city council and was active in his later mayoral campaigns. In 1976, Barry began teaching political science at the University of the District of Columbia, and was hired as the northern Virginia minority coordinator for President Jimmy Carter's reelection campaign in 1980. Barry first became interested in boxing when she organized a boxing fundraiser for the maintenance of athletic programs in Washington D.C.'s public schools. In 1980, Marion Barry, then mayor of D.C., appointed her to the District of Columbia's Boxing and Wrestling Commission. Her nomination was controversial.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_001_005, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Cora Masters Barry talks about her controversial nomination to the District of Columbia Boxing and Wrestling Commission where she was sworn in as chairman in 1975. She talks about her tenure as chairman, as well as her first weigh-in, where she was made to sit behind a screen because she was female. Barry talks about regulating recuperation periods for fighters with the development of The Passport, a document that granted injured boxers permission to fight. She describes an interaction with Joe Frazier and his son Marvis Frazier. She also talks about the court proceedings surrounding a 1988 allegation that accused her of "double-dipping," and being paid for her travel by both the city of D.C. and the International Boxing Federation. Barry talks about female officials in boxing, and about her involvement and contributions to the International Boxing Federation. She talks about HistoryMaker Marion Barry's tenure as mayor; and the evolution of her relationship with Barry, which led to their marriage in 1994.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_002_006, TRT: 6:30:52 ?

Cora Masters Barry married HistoryMaker Marion Barry in 1994. Barry ran a voter registration drive for Marion Barry's 1994 re-election campaign and chaired his inaugural committee. Barry describes her experience as first lady of Washington, D.C. and explains the founding of the Recreation Wish List Committee, a fundraising organization for the maintenance and preservation of D.C. recreational facilities. She talks about its early supporters including Mayor William "Bill" McSweeney and Velma Nellum, how she conceived of the idea for the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center, and its first phase of development, including consulting an architect and securing a pro bono lawyer and banking institution. She also talks about the involvement of John Tydings, former Greater Washington Board of Trade president, and the selection of a design team. The Southeast Tennis and Learning Center opened in Southeast Washington D.C. on April 22, 2001.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_002_007, TRT: 7:29:09 ?

Cora Masters Barry hosted an event to kickoff the capital campaign for the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center. She secured project developer Jennifer Coken for the Center's construction and worked on its unveiling ceremony which former first lady Hilary Clinton attended. Barry talks about how the Washington Tennis Foundation tried to block her fundraising efforts for the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center and how she secured \$100,000 in funding from Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and a generous contribution from former Washington D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams. The Southeast Tennis and Learning

Center opened in Southeast Washington D.C. on April 22, 2001. Barry describes the educational and athletic programming that the center offers and the involvement of tennis players Venus and Serena Williams in her efforts.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_002_008, TRT: 8:30:04 ?

Cora Masters Barry expresses her passion for the impact the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center makes on the poor community of Southeast Washington D.C. In 2009, she received an eviction notice from the office of Washington D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty, accusing Barry of failing to renew the corporate papers for the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center. Barry collaborated with HistoryMakers Dorothy Height and Maya Angelou to defend the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center. Other supporters included HistoryMaker Susan Taylor, Oracene Williams Price, and Marcia L. Dyson. The matter went to court and the court ruled in favor of the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center and the facility remained open. The Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia Vincent C. Gray passed legislation stating that, if any nonprofit's corporate papers lapse, that they can be renewed without penalty. Barry talks about the importance of the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_002_009, TRT: 9:22:29 ?

Cora Masters Barry talks about the talented players at the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center and hosting the National Junior Tennis League tournament. The Center celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2011. Barry describes the social services available at the Center, the future of the organization and her church, Union Temple Baptist Church, in Washington, D.C. She also talks about her relationship with her daughters, former Mayor of Washington D.C. Marion Barry, and with her mother Isabell Masters. Isabell Masters ran for President of the United States four times. Barry describes an interaction between her mother and former United States president William "Bill" Clinton. Barry describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflects upon her legacy and how she would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_003_010, TRT: 10:29:15 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_003_011, TRT: 11:29:55 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Cora Masters Barry, Section A2005_121_003_012, TRT: 12:43:59 ?