

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Valerie Richardson Jackson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jackson, Valerie Richardson, 1949-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson,
Dates:	December 16, 2012 and June 23, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005 and 2012
Physical Description:	9 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:00:56).
Abstract:	Civic leader Valerie Richardson Jackson (1949 -) was the widow of former Atlanta mayor Maynard Jackson, and the host of <i>Between the Lines</i> , a radio interview show on Atlanta, Georgia's, public radio station WABE. Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 16, 2012 and June 23, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_148
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Valerie Richardson Jackson, host of Atlanta, Georgia's, public radio station WABE's *Between the Lines*, a series of conversations with some of today's brightest and most notable writers and thinkers, and former First Lady of Atlanta as wife of the first African American mayor of Atlanta, Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr, was born April 3, 1949 in Richmond, Virginia. Raised by parents Cora Ruth Feggins Richardson and Charles Hoover Richardson, Jackson integrated the high school she attended in Richmond and went on to major in business management at Virginia Commonwealth University. Jackson earned her M.B.A. degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania; after graduating in 1973, she worked as an advertising executive at Grey Advertising in New York City, and as Regional Marketing Supervisor for TWA's corporate headquarters in New York.

Jackson met Maynard Jackson at a party hosted by Roberta Flack in 1976. In 1977, during Maynard Jackson's second of three terms as Mayor of Atlanta, the couple was married; they had two children, Valerie-Amanda and Alexandra. During her twelve years as First Lady of Atlanta, Jackson served as Special Advisor to the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, helping to bring the 1988 Democratic National Convention and the 1996 Olympic Games to Atlanta. Maynard Jackson's last term in office ended in 1993, but both Jacksons remained active in civic life as Maynard Jackson was considering a bid for the U.S. Senate in 2002. Jackson husband died at age 65 of a heart attack on June 23, 2003, while on a business trip to Washington, D.C.

As host of *Between the Lines*, Valerie Richardson Jackson interviewed such notable individuals as Hillary Clinton, Sidney Poitier, former President Jimmy Carter, Cornell West, Ayanla Vanzant, and Deepak Chopra. Jackson served as chair of Jackmont Hospitality, Inc., and as president of Jackson Securities, Inc. In addition to her executive and radio activities, Jackson worked with civic boards and organizations as a motivational speaker, and volunteered on numerous civic boards and organizations, including the Maynard Jackson Youth Foundation; Habitat for Humanity; Leadership Atlanta; the Northwest Georgia Girl Scout Council; and the Alliance for a New Humanity.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 16, 2012 and June 23, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 9 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Civic leader Valerie Richardson Jackson (1949 -) was the widow of former Atlanta mayor Maynard Jackson, and the host of Between the Lines, a radio interview show on Atlanta, Georgia's, public radio station WABE.

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:

Jackson, Valerie Richardson, 1949-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jackson, Valerie Richardson, 1949---Interviews

African American women civic leaders--Interviews

African American radio broadcasters--Interviews

Radio personalities--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 Valerie Richardson Jackson, December 16, 2012 and June 23, 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 Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_001_001,
TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson was born on April 3, 1949 in Richmond, Virginia to Cora Feggins Richardson and Charles Richardson. Jackson's maternal great-grandfather on the Feggins' side was part Scottish, Irish and Native American and a Freemason. Her second set of maternal great-grandparents, John and Hattie Boyd, traveled from Bracey, Virginia to Baltimore to get married near the turn of the 19th century. Jackson's maternal grandfather was a farmer and carpenter who designed his own family crest and established the first form of public transportation for blacks in his community. Her paternal grandfather was a jackleg preacher and a respected chauffeur for a white family. Jackson's mother was born in 1929 in Bracey. Jackson's father was born in 1928 in Richmond. Jackson recalls her maternal family being light-skinned; her parents' education, jobs, and personalities; how they met; growing up with seven siblings; and integrating her high school. She also recounts Patricia J. Williams' thoughts about race.

African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

African American radio broadcasters--Interviews.

Radio personalities--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_001_002,
TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson was raised in a middle-class black neighborhood in Richmond, Virginia, where she played in the hills and often found relics presumably from Confederate soldiers. She recalls the garbage dump near her house, and being molested on her walk back from school when she was eight years old. Her family attended Mount Tabor Baptist Church, where she sang in the choir. A curious young girl with an aptitude for learning, Jackson was an avid reader who enjoyed singing, art and acting. She attended Woodville Elementary and Whitcomb Court Elementary Schools, where she particularly enjoyed English and reading. Her teacher, Beatrice Clark, made a lasting impression on her, and encouraged her to join the Girl Scouts of America. Jackson started high school at Benjamin E. Mays Junior High School, but transferred to Henrico High School upon her mother's insistence. She describes the challenges that she and her brothers faced in integrating the school.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_001_003,
TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson integrated Henrico High School in Richmond, where she excelled in her studies, attended prom, and won the Miss Warrior Contest. At the age of sixteen, she obtained a job as telephone operator and continued working throughout college. Upon graduating in 1967, she enrolled at Richmond Professional Institute as one of its first black students. After Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, Jackson and other students formed the college's first black student union. She earned her B.S. degree in management and began working at the Neighborhood Youth Corps. Encouraged by the dean of students while in college, Jackson applied to the Wharton School and received a tuition scholarship. Although she was the only African American and woman in her class, she had seventeen job offers upon receiving her M.B.A. degree in 1973. While working as an advertising executive at Grey Group, Jackson met her future husband, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, at singer Roberta Flack's home.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_001_004,
TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson met Maynard Jackson at a party hosted by singer Roberta Flack in 1976 in New York City. The couple married in 1977, during Maynard Jackson's second of three terms as the mayor of Atlanta. Jackson recalls their courtship, and her active role as the First Lady of Atlanta. To assist Maynard Jackson's administration, she helped ensure that the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta were accessible to the city's underprivileged children and met with dignitaries, such as Charles, Prince of Wales. She describes the challenges her family faced during her husband's mayoral tenure, and her first impressions of Atlanta. After her husband's death in 2003, Jackson took over the chairmanship of the Maynard Jackson Youth Foundation, which focuses on leadership training for schoolchildren.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_002_005,
TRT: 5:29:08 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson married Maynard Jackson in a small ceremony in 1977, during his second of three terms as the mayor of Atlanta. She recalls his popularity; his relationship with President Jimmy Carter and former mayor of Atlanta, Ivan Allen, Jr.; Atlanta's bid for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games; and construction of the international terminal at Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport, where he fought to move a highway to accommodate the new terminal. During Mayor Jackson's administration, Atlanta became known as the "mecca" of black life; city contracts awarded to minorities increased from less than one percent to approximately thirty percent. During her twelve years as First Lady of Atlanta, Jackson served as special advisor to the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, helping to bring the 1988 Democratic National Convention and the 1996 Olympic Games to Atlanta. Jackson also recalls the Atlanta child murders, and the impact of Turner Broadcasting and CNN on increasing the city's visibility.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_002_006,
TRT: 6:28:31 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson's husband, Maynard Jackson, served as the first African American mayor of Atlanta, Georgia for a total of three terms, with the first two from 1974 to 1982, and the final term from 1990 to 1994. Jackson reflects upon her husband's strong personality, his salesmanship, and his legacy. She recalls his second and third terms as mayor, which he won in a landslide, and his collaborative relationship with his successor, HistoryMaker Andrew Young. She also reflects upon the time she spent as Atlanta's first lady, the preservation of The King Center and Auburn Avenue as the historic center of black life in Atlanta, and the city as the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement. Jackson believes that her husband's legacy serves as an example to African Americans, women, and other minorities to use power constructively and without fear.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_002_007,
TRT: 7:29:03 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson recalls her husband, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson's heart surgery in 1992, and his role as a U.S. attache in the 1996 Summer Olympics. In addition to her role as the first lady of the city, Jackson established a career in television and radio broadcasting in Atlanta. She appeared on a current affairs news show for Georgia Public Broadcasting. As host of the radio program 'Between the Lines,' Jackson interviewed such notable individuals as Hillary Clinton, Sidney Poitier, former President Jimmy Carter,

Cornell West, Iyanla Vanzant, and Deepak Chopra. Jackson explains her process for selecting guests for the show. She also describes her volunteer work as a motivational speaker and on various civic boards and organizations, including the Maynard Jackson Youth Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Leadership Atlanta, and the Northwest Georgia Girl Scout Council of Northwest Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_002_008, TRT: 8:27:46 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson served as chairwoman of Jackmont Hospitality, Inc. and co-founded Atlanta Restaurant Partners after the death of her husband, Maynard Jackson, in 2003. At the time of the interview, the organization, which operates a series of TGI Friday restaurants, was run by Jackson alongside Daniel Halpern and her stepdaughter, Brooke Jackson Edmond. She recalls her husband's legacy as a three-term mayor of Atlanta, Georgia, and his bid for the U.S. Senate in 1968 and 2002. Jackson reflects upon her life, legacy and the election of President Barack Obama. She describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community and the City of Atlanta, Georgia in 2012. She concludes the interview by talking about her family, her parents, siblings, and how she would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Richardson Jackson, Section A2005_148_002_009, TRT: 9:08:08 ?

Valerie Richardson Jackson narrates her photographs.