

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lynn Jones Huntley

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Huntley, Lynn
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 26, 2005 and December 14, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	9 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:09:08).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Foundation executive and civil rights lawyer Lynn Jones Huntley (1946 - 2015 ) was president of the Southern Education Foundation, the American South's only African American-led public charity. Huntley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 26, 2005 and December 14, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_207
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Activist attorney Lynn Jones Huntley was born on January 24, 1946, in Petersburg, Virginia, to theologian Lawrence Neale Jones and Mary Ellen Cooley Jones. Huntley began school in Baumholder, Germany, and later attended schools in Oberlin, Ohio, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New Haven Connecticut, and Nashville, Tennessee. Huntley entered college at Fisk University as an early entrant, and later earned her A.B. degree in sociology with honors from Barnard College. Huntley was the first African American female editor of the Columbia Law Review; she graduated cum laude from Columbia Law School with her J.D. degree in 1970.

After law school, Huntley clerked for Judge Constance Baker Motley in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. Joining the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in 1971, Huntley served as staff attorney and participated in the defense of prisoners involved in the Attica Prison uprising. Huntley also helped write the winning brief in *Furman v. Georgia*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court declared the death penalty to be cruel and unusual punishment within the meaning of the eighth and fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Huntley later secured executive clemency for noted human and prisoner rights activist Martin Sostre.

From 1973 to 1975, Huntley served as general counsel to the New York State Commission on Human Rights. In 1978, Huntley joined the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division where she served as Section Chief and acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General. From 1982 to 1995, Huntley worked at the Ford Foundation as Program Officer, and Deputy and Director of the Rights and Social Justice Program; the Program had a core biennial budget of \$44 million which funded efforts related to minority rights and opportunities; legal services for the poor; women's rights, both domestic and international; minorities and communications; and Black church secular service delivery efforts.

In 1995, Huntley joined the Southern Education Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia, to direct the Comparative Human Relations Initiative; a study of race, poverty and inequality in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States. Huntley

became the president of the Southern Education Foundation in 2002, the South's only African American lead and directed public charity, which focused on improving education for low income students, from preschool through higher education.

Huntley serves as a board member of the American Constitution Society, CARE USA, Grantmakers for Education, the Georgia Student Finance Commission, and the Interdenominational Theological Seminary. Huntley is the recipient of the first Thurgood Marshall Award from the Association of the Board of New York, and the Lucy Terry Prince Award of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights, among other honors. Huntley co-edited with Charles V. Hamilton and others *Beyond Racism: Embracing an Interdependent Future* in 2000, and *Beyond Racism: Race and Equality in Brazil, South Africa and the United States* in 2001.

Lynn Jones Huntley passed away on August 30, 2015, at the age of 69.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lynn Jones Huntley was conducted by Evelyn Pounds and Larry Crowe on August 26, 2005 and December 14, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 9 Betacame SP videocassettes. Foundation executive and civil rights lawyer Lynn Jones Huntley (1946 - 2015 ) was president of the Southern Education Foundation, the American South's only African American-led public charity.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Huntley, Lynn

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Pounds, Evelyn (Interviewer)

Jackson, Adrian (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Huntley, Lynn--Interviews

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African American women lawyers--Interviews

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African American women civil rights workers--Interviews

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Endowments--Officials and employees--Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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Southern Education Foundation

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## Occupations:

Civil Rights Lawyer

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Foundation Executive

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|LawMakers

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## 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 Lynn Jones Huntley, August 26, 2005 and December 14, 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:21 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley was born on August 26, 2005 in Petersburg, Virginia. Her paternal great-great-grandmother was a slave. When slavery ended, her former owner in Mooresville, West Virginia asked her to continue working for pay, and she refused. Huntley's paternal grandmother lived in the coal mining town of Moundsville, West Virginia, where Huntley's grandfather, a former traveling salesman, owned a grocery store and served as a notary for small businesses. Huntley's father, Lawrence N. Jones, was born in Moundsville in 1921. After attending West Virginia State College and the University of Chicago, he taught English at a segregated high school in West Virginia. Huntley's maternal great-grandmother was a laundress in Roanoke, Virginia. Huntley's mother, Mary Ellen Cooley Jones, was born in 1921 in Marion, Virginia. In 1945, she met Huntley's father, then a ROTC instructor, at Virginia State College. Following his U.S. military service in Germany, he attended Yale Divinity School and entered the ministry.

African American women lawyers--Interviews.

African American women civil rights workers--Interviews.

Endowments--Officials and employees--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:16 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley began first grade in Germany, where a white child called her a racist name and threw a bottle at her. She then attended a segregated school in Moundsville, West Virginia, followed by Pleasant Street School in Oberlin, Ohio. Due to her father's career changes, she transferred schools often. In New Haven, Connecticut, she attended Edgewood Elementary School and, after a stint in Philadelphia, Troup Junior High School. When her father became dean of Fisk University's chapel, Huntley attended Pearl High School in Nashville, Tennessee. At Fisk, she cleaned the girls' dormitories during semester breaks. Her father was dean at New York City's Union Theological Seminary, where he mentored HistoryMaker Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts. He then joined Howard University School of Divinity. From her father, Huntley gained her intellectual aspirations; and, from her mother, she acquired her sense of humor. Huntley also

describes her younger brother, Rodney Bruce Jones, a successful guitarist.

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_001\_003, TRT:  
0:29:31 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley, from 1963 to 1965, attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee where she was in the honors program and a sorority. She participated in the March on Washington in 1963, which inspired her interest in social justice. Transferring to Barnard College in New York City, Huntley majored in sociology and became involved in the school's African American community. After graduating in 1967, she matriculated at Columbia Law School to pursue civil rights law. In a competitive class of three hundred, Huntley was one of ten black students. When Students for a Democratic Society demonstrated at the university, she participated with the Black Law Students Association in sit-ins to increase black enrollment at the law school. She became the first African American female editor of the Columbia Law Review. After working for a majority-white, corporate law firm, Cravath, Swaine & Moore, Huntley's preference for civil rights law was confirmed. Judge Constance Baker Motley selected Huntley to be her clerk.

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_001\_004, TRT:  
0:29:37 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley clerked for Constance Baker Motley who insisted on equal justice in her courtroom. When an assistant U.S. attorney treated an African American defendant differently than wealthy, white defendants, Motley challenged his office's procedures. In 1971, Motley decided *Sostre v. McGinnis*. The landmark case determined jurisprudence for prison conditions, including solitary confinement, which were issues that Huntley later tackled in her career. After her clerkship, Huntley worked briefly in legal aid. However, Jack Greenberg of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. soon hired her to handle death penalty cases. Her first lawsuit was representing inmates who, in the aftermath of the Attica Prison Uprising, had been transferred to Green Haven Correctional Facility in Stormville, New York, where they were being treated inhumanely. On LDF death penalty cases, Huntley worked with HistoryMaker Elaine Jones and Jack Himmelstein. She also sought clemency for political prisoner Martin Sostre.

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_001\_005, TRT:  
0:28:19 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley worked for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. on death penalty cases and on clemency campaigns for falsely accused inmates. In 1975, she joined the New York City Commission on Human Rights, chaired by Eleanor Holmes Norton, where Huntley enforced local antidiscrimination laws. After a year and a half, she returned to LDF to continue her work on prison reform and death penalty litigation. She contributed to *Guthrie v. Evans*, which sought to stop abuse and inadequate health treatment at Georgia State Prison. She recounts how her life was possibly saved by a death row inmate, Troy Leon Gregg, who convinced her to hold a hearing at the prison, rather than having inmates transferred to the courthouse. He warned her of an escape, which took place years later. From 1978 to 1982, Huntley led the Special Litigation Section for U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. Huntley shares her stance on the death penalty, and talks about the U.S. criminal justice system.

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_002\_006, TRT:  
0:29:07 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley worked for the U.S. Department of Justice during the Carter

administration. When President Ronald Reagan's administration began to dismantle civil rights gains, Huntley left. She then served as minority rights and opportunities officer for the Ford Foundation, which supported her values in social justice. With the Foundation, Huntley worked closely with African American churches to advance community development. She was able to allocate support for minority media projects, such as Henry Hampton's Civil Rights Movement documentary, 'Eyes on the Prize.' Huntley also worked to provide grants for civil rights litigation and advocacy groups, including the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. She addressed international human rights issues, including anti-apartheid strategies in South Africa. At the Southern Education Foundation, Huntley spearheaded the Comparative Human Relations Initiative to foster collaboration between the U.S., South Africa and Brazil on social issues.

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_002\_007, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley spearheaded the Comparative Human Relations Initiative to understand cultural and racial similarities between the United States, South Africa and Brazil. Through the project, she contributed to a scholarly anthology, 'Beyond Racism.' In 2002, she succeeded Eldridge McMillan as president of the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) in Atlanta, Georgia. The SEF is a multifaceted, non-profit organization dedicated to education issues in the South. During her tenure, Huntley worked with historically black colleges and universities to augment their fundraising capabilities. In addition, the Foundation developed initiatives, such as the Miles to Go program, to improve the economic conditions of preschools and low-income schools. Huntley also helped create the Education Summers Youth Leadership Initiative to expose southern undergraduates to non-profit employment opportunities. Huntley remembers her mentor, Judge Constance Baker Motley, and reflects upon her career.

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_002\_008, TRT: 0:24:04 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley is married to Walter R. Huntley, Jr., a native of San Antonio, Texas who directed the Atlanta Economic Development Corporation. She has several nieces, including one who is a teacher in New York City. Her stepdaughter, Tyeise Huntley, is a graduate of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. In reflecting upon her decision to be interviewed by The HistoryMakers, Huntley notes that sharing her story may help others. Huntley describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community. She offers advice for aspiring law professionals, and reflects upon her life, legacy, and how she would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Jones Huntley, Section A2005\_207\_002\_009, TRT: 0:22:33 ?

Lynn Jones Huntley narrates her photographs.