

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Yvonne Jackson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jackson, Yvonne, 1949-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Yvonne Jackson,
Dates:	February 15, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:13:44).
Abstract:	Corporate executive Yvonne Jackson (1949 -) owns her own management and human resources consulting firm, Beecher Jackson. Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 15, 2006, in Coral Gables, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_018
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Corporate executive Yvonne Ruth Jackson was born on June 30, 1949 in Los Angeles, California. Her father, Giles B. Jackson, was a judge. Jackson's mother, Gwendolyn Lackey Battle was a teacher. Jackson has a twin sister, Yvette L. Townsend, and an older sister, Mignon W. Jackson. She attended the One Hundred Ninth Elementary School and Jordan High School in Los Angeles. Jackson graduated from high school in 1966, and then attended her aunt Mignon Lewis' alma mater, Spelman College. In 1970, she received her B.A. degree in history.

Upon graduating from Spelman College, Jackson worked as a personnel manager for Sears Roebuck & Company. In 1979, she became an executive recruiter for Avon Products, Inc. From 1980 to 1983, Jackson was promoted to manager of employee relations and staffing. Jackson then received a certificate in management development from Harvard Business School in 1985. In 1989, she became Avon Products' Vice-President of Human Resources for the North American division. Jackson went on to work for Burger King Corporation in 1993, Compaq Computers in 1999, and the pharmaceutical company, Pfizer, Inc. as Senior Vice-President of Human Resources. Some of the key responsibilities as senior vice-president included strengthening business growth and development, launching communication and retention programs, structuring global human resource strategy and leadership programs, and developing human resource training and development programs.

Jackson has recently formed her own management and human resources consulting firm, Beecher Jackson. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the 2004 Alumni of the Year from Spelman College. Jackson is currently chair of the Board of Trustees at Spelman College, and serves as a board member for Girls, Inc. and the Institute for Women's Policy. She also serves on the Advisory Council for the accounting firm of Price-Waterhouse.

Jackson resides in Coral Gables, Florida with her husband, Fredrick Jackson, Jr.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Yvonne Jackson was conducted by Tracey Lewis on February 15, 2006, in Coral Gables, Florida, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate executive Yvonne Jackson (1949 -) owns her own management and human resources consulting firm, Beecher Jackson.

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, Yvonne, 1949-

Lewis, Tracey (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jackson, Yvonne, 1949- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Corporate Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Yvonne Jackson, February 15, 2006. 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 Yvonne Jackson, Section A2006_018_001_001, TRT: 0:29:22 ?
Yvonne Jackson was born on June 30, 1949 in Los Angeles, California to Gwendolyn Lackey Battle and Giles Jackson. Her paternal great-great-grandmother was both the wife and slave of Hugh McMullen, an Irish immigrant. Her maternal grandmother, Doll Beaty Lackey, was born in Waco, Texas, and her grandfather, Sevallia Lackey, was born in Oklahoma. Both attended Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma and were members of the African Methodist Episcopal church in Oklahoma. Her grandfather worked as a janitor for the United States Postal Service. Jackson's grandmother continued her education at Clark Atlanta University and the Fashion Institute of

Technology in New York City. Jackson and her twin sister, Yvette Jackson Townsend, lived with their maternal grandparents for a year. Jackson remembers having geography lessons at school as well as at home with her grandmother. Jackson also narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Yvonne Jackson, Section A2006_018_001_002, TRT: 0:30:01 ?

Yvonne Jackson's paternal great-grandfather was Giles Beecher Jackson, a friend of Frederick Douglass and the first African American attorney in Virginia. Her father was born in Richmond, Virginia to Bessie Hilton Jackson, a teacher, and Roscoe Jackson, a politician. Her parents met at Virginia State University and moved to Los Angeles, California. Her father attended Southwest Law School and was a judge in the superior court. She and her twin sister, Yvette Jackson Townsend, lived with their maternal grandparents for a year when they were ten; Jackson recalls her grandparents' personalities and learning geography after school with her grandmother. She did not notice racial discrimination in the African American neighborhood of Watts in Los Angeles, until she experienced it while living with her grandmother in Ardmore, Oklahoma. She attended 109th Street Elementary School and Jordan High School in Los Angeles. She remembers one of her father's legal cases from the 1950s and the effects of Watts riots of 1965.

Video Oral History Interview with Yvonne Jackson, Section A2006_018_001_003, TRT: 0:30:27 ?

Yvonne Jackson attended Jordan High School in Los Angeles, California. After the Watts riots of 1965, the community pulled together to build a new science facility and to buy unused books for the high school. Jackson remembers her mentors from high school, and describes her relationship with her twin sister, Yvette Jackson Townsend. Her sister attended Pitzer College in Claremont, California and served as the chief of mental health for the county of Los Angeles. Inspired to follow the path of her aunt, Mignon Jackson Lackey Lewis, Jackson attended Spelman College. She describes the elation she felt at the opening convocation ceremony. Jackson majored in history and minored in business administration. She had to take her business classes at Morehouse College, where she was one of only two female students. Overly focused on her social life during her freshman year, Jackson failed a biology class. She also served as a bearer when Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. laid in state at the school's Sisters Chapel.

Video Oral History Interview with Yvonne Jackson, Section A2006_018_001_004, TRT: 0:29:57 ?

Yvonne Jackson's parents' divorced when she was in junior high school, although they both remained in Watts, Los Angeles. She worked throughout her childhood at a cleaners and selling potholders she made. Her early entrepreneurialism influenced her to study business at Atlanta's Spelman College. She nearly failed her freshmen year, and she reflects upon that experience and other lessons she learned at the college. Spelman College had a strict dress code that prohibited wearing pants. Jackson recalls wearing an afro and explains how that influenced her decision to enter Sears, Roebuck and Co.'s management training program in Los Angeles in 1970. There, her father, a juvenile court judge, was mistaken for white while visiting her at work. Jackson married her first husband, George Watson, whom she met in college, and moved to New York City to continue her career with Sears. Jackson was the first African American and woman in many of her roles, including her positions at Pfizer, Compaq, and Burger King.

Video Oral History Interview with Yvonne Jackson, Section A2006_018_001_005, TRT: 0:30:42 ?

Yvonne Jackson left Sears, Roebuck and Co. in 1979 when they decided to move their headquarters to Chicago, Illinois. She was offered a position in

Chicago, but wanted to work in human resources as she preferred to influence the development of people rather than products. She was offered a merchandising position at Avon Products Inc., but became manager of employee relations at American Express Company instead. Unhappy with the company culture, she left after three months when Avon offered her a human resources position. She explains the role of human resources and the process of workflow re-engineering. Jackson helped to develop special programs to diversify Avon's workforce. She also worked for Avon in Japan to give women equal pay and diversify upper management. Jackson was promoted to vice president of human resources, but decided to leave Avon in 1993 after disagreeing with her new supervisor. She instead moved to Miami, Florida to re-engineer the workforce of Burger King.

Video Oral History Interview with Yvonne Jackson, Section A2006_018_001_006, TRT: 0:30:23 ?

Yvonne Jackson reflects upon what being a great manager means to her, emphasizing the need to work hard. She remembers how surprised she was when she was promoted at Avon Products Inc., particularly upon her promotion to vice president of international human resources. Jackson left Burger King in 1999 to work for Compaq Computer Corporation in Houston, Texas. She remembers interviewing for the position with CEO Michael Capellas in New York City. Jackson met her second husband, Frederick Jackson, Jr., while skiing in Canada. Compaq was acquired by Hewlett-Packard Company, and Jackson remembers how HP CEO Carly Fiorina was criticized regarding the merger. Jackson subsequently left the company, as her role conflicted with her husband's career at International Business Machines Corporation. She took a position as head of human resource at Pfizer and worked there for three years before semi-retiring. Jackson served as chairman of the search committee that named Beverly Daniel Tatum as president of Spelman College.

Video Oral History Interview with Yvonne Jackson, Section A2006_018_001_007, TRT: 0:12:52 ?

Yvonne Jackson reflects upon her legacy and her achievements as chair of the Board of Trustees at Spelman College. She describes how she would like to be remembered and gives advice for future generations on how to be successful and happy in your career.