

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Delores P. Aldridge

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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>	Aldridge, Delores P.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Delores P. Aldridge,
<b>Dates:</b>	October 10, 2006
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2006
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:25:20).
<b>Abstract:</b>	African american studies professor Delores P. Aldridge (1941 - ) authored <i>Focusing: Black Male Female Relationships</i> . The Grace Towns Hamilton Distinguished Professor of Sociology and African American Studies at Emory University, she founded the first African American and African Studies degree-granting program in the South, twice served as president of the National Council for Black Studies, and chaired the International Black Women's Congress. Aldridge was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 10, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2006_111
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Grace Towns Hamilton Distinguished Professor of Sociology and African American Studies at Emory University, Delores Patricia Aldridge was born on June 8, 1941, in Tampa, Florida, to Mary Ellen Bennett Aldridge and Willie Lee Aldridge. She had private schooling at Allen Temple A.M.E. Church. She then attended Meacham Elementary School; and Booker T. Washington Junior High School; and was valedictorian of Middleton High School in 1959. At Atlanta's Clark College, Aldridge received her B.S. degree in sociology and Spanish. Aldridge earned her M.A. degree in social work from Atlanta University in 1966. In 1967, she obtained her certificate in child psychology from University College Dublin. In 1968, she studied family treatment techniques at the University of Montreal. Aldridge earned her Ph.D. in sociology from Purdue University in 1971. She went on to study African art and politics at the University of Ghana at Legon in 1972 and completed postgraduate study at Georgetown University in 1979.

In 1971, Aldridge became the first African American woman faculty member of Emory University and founding director of the first African American and African Studies degree-granting program in the South, which she administered until 1990. In 1988 and 1992, she studied gender and race issues in the Soviet Union and Brazil. Aldridge served as national president of four separate national organizations including an unprecedented two terms as president of the National Council for Black Studies. She has been chairman of the board of a number of organizations including the International Black Women's Congress (IBWC). As chair of the IBWC, she organized international conferences on issues related to the health of African women. Aldridge also published *Toward Integrating Africana Women into Africana Studies* in 1992 and co-edited *River of Tears: The Politics of Black Women's Health* in 1993. She is popularly known for her 1994 work, *Focusing: Black Male Female Relationships*.

Aldridge is the recipient of over one hundred awards and was consultant for over ninety foreign governments. She is the author and editor of over one hundred sixty commentaries, articles, and monographs on race, gender, politics, family diversity, multiculturalism and cultural democracy. Aldridge's latest work is *The Invisible Pioneers: Black Women Sociologists*, and she is working on a partnership with the Georgia State Legislature and Georgia Coalition of Black Women to develop an encyclopedic volume, *The Social and Economic Contributions of Georgia Women*.

Aldridge was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 10, 2006.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Delores P. Aldridge was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 10, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. African american studies professor Delores P. Aldridge (1941 - ) authored *Focusing: Black Male Female Relationships*. The Grace Towns Hamilton Distinguished Professor of Sociology and African American Studies at Emory University, she founded the first African American and African Studies degree-granting program in the South, twice served as president of the National Council for Black Studies, and chaired the International Black Women's Congress.

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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:

Aldridge, Delores P.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Aldridge, Delores P. --Interviews

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Emory University--Faculty--Interviews

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African American women college administrators--Georgia--Atlanta--Interviews

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African American sociologists--Georgia--Atlanta--Interviews

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African American women authors--Interviews

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African American intellectuals--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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Emory University

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**Occupations:**

African American Studies Professor

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**HistoryMakers® Category:**

EducationMakers

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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 Delores P. Aldridge, October 10, 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).

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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 Delores P. Aldridge, Section A2006\_111\_001\_001, TRT: 0:27:30 ?

Delores P. Aldridge was born June 8, 1941 to Mary Ellen Bennett Aldridge and Wille Lee Aldridge, Sr. in Tampa, Florida. Aldridge's maternal great grandmother was a mid-wife, and owned a pecan orchard in Lake City, Florida. Her mother was born in Waycross, Georgia in 1923. When she was young, her father passed away, and her family relocated to Tampa, where she finished high school and earned an electrician certification. Aldridge's father was born in 1921 in Quincy, Florida. In Tampa, he worked cleaning grocery stores and barber shops, and met Aldridge's mother in junior high school. He served in the U.S. Navy and was a Pullman porter on the Seaboard Air Line Railroad before becoming a personnel employee at Tampa's MacDill Air Force Base. Aldridge and her three siblings grew up in Tampa's Ybor City, a diverse, Spanish community with a sizable Cuban population. She recalls the aromas of southern cooking, like her mother's apple pies, and Spanish dishes. She also describes how she takes after her parents.

Emory University--Faculty--Interviews.

African American women college administrators--Georgia--Atlanta--Interviews.

African American sociologists--Georgia--Atlanta--Interviews.

African American women authors--Interviews.

African American intellectuals--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Delores P. Aldridge, Section A2006\_111\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Delores P. Aldridge grew up in Tampa, Florida, where her family moved from the housing projects to their own home when she was two years old. She began private schooling at Allen Temple A.M.E. Church before attending Christine Meacham Elementary School. She also saw Major League Baseball games with her father, and participated in Sunday school conventions near Tampa. As a student at Booker T. Washington Junior High School, she saw Mary McLeod Bethune, whom her father admired, speak in Daytona Beach, Florida. Aldridge continued her academic success at George S. Middleton High School, where she was active in social clubs; had an impressive English teacher, Ms. Barry; and was valedictorian of her class. While she applied to a number of schools, she decided to attend Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia in 1959. There, student government president Benjamin Brown mentored her, and she admired for Morehouse College's president, Benjamin Mays. Aldridge also names her

maternal grandmother as her greatest hero.

Video Oral History Interview with Delores P. Aldridge, Section A2006\_111\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Delores P. Aldridge majored in social science and Spanish at Atlanta's Clark College. She specialized in sociology. She was also active in the Civil Rights Movement. Following a sit-in at Lester Maddox's Pickrick Cafeteria, she spent two weeks in jail. She received support from her parents and Atlanta University Center faculty. On campus, she heard Queen Mother Moore and Malcolm X speak. Upon graduating in 1963, she worked at the Department of Public Welfare in Fort Pierce, Florida. She enrolled in the social work master's degree program at Atlanta University, and interned at the Fulton County Department of Welfare. She served as associate director of the Tampa Urban League before receiving a two-year fellowship to the University of Ireland in Dublin. She completed her postgraduate child psychology degree, and facilitated training for social workers. She describes Ireland's class divide. Returning to the United States, she founded a comprehensive mental health center at Florida's Winter Haven Hospital.

Video Oral History Interview with Delores P. Aldridge, Section A2006\_111\_001\_004, TRT: 0:27:50 ?

Delores P. Aldridge completed her Ph.D. degree in sociology at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana from 1968 to 1971. In addition to her full-time program, Aldridge directed community services for Greater Lafayette Community Centers and the Indiana Commission on Human Relations. The dean of the Emory College of Arts and Sciences recruited Aldridge to found and develop the school's African American studies department. At that time, she was also the university's first African American female faculty member. Since the department's inception, Aldridge witnessed the impact of the black studies movement, through which the perspectives of people of color emerged, particularly in the social sciences. Successful courses included the Dynamics of the Black Community and African American History. She describes the importance of diversity in the social science field, and reflects upon the development of black sociological thought, including the exclusion of thinkers like W.E.B. Du Bois from mainstream curriculum.

Video Oral History Interview with Delores P. Aldridge, Section A2006\_111\_001\_005, TRT: 0:31:00 ?

Delores P. Aldridge was president of the National Council of Black Studies for two terms, in addition to serving on numerous committees. With Carlene Young, she co-edited 'Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies,' which featured contributions by prominent Africana scholars. She describes the field of Africana studies, including the discipline's pioneers, like Nathan Hare and Molefi Kete Asante. Aldridge also describes her work on black male-female relationships. With her husband, Kwame Essuon, Aldridge created the Kess Nsona Foundation to provide financial assistance to Ghanaian undergraduates. Together, the couple had two children, Aba Delores Essuon and Kwame Gyesie Essuon. Aldridge describes her post-retirement plans; her hopes and concerns for the African American community; how she would like to be remembered; and her life's defining moments. She reflects upon her life and legacy, and concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.