

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Priscilla Clarke

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Clarke, Priscilla, 1960-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Priscilla Clarke,
Dates:	November 10, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:54:20).
Abstract:	Public relations chief executive Priscilla Clarke (1960 -) is the president and CEO of Clarke & Associates, LLC, a public relations, event planning, entertainment and media relations company, whose clients have included Beyonce Knowles, Shaquille O'Neal, the National Council of Negro Women and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. Clarke was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 10, 2006, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_138
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Public relations chief executive Priscilla Clarke was born on August 3, 1960 in Swindon, England to Dorothy Sharples, a white Englishwoman, and Gilbert Clarke, an African American stationed in the United Kingdom. The family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts when she was an infant. Her parents divorced when she was six, and Clarke split her time between their homes in Springfield, Massachusetts and Windsor, Connecticut, graduating from Windsor High School in 1978. Clarke attended Western New England College, where she majored in political science, but left school to give birth to her first daughter.

Clarke moved to Maryland, where she owned and managed a health food store in Gaithersburg, Maryland from 1988 to 2001. After selling the store, she embarked on a career in television production, taking classes at Fairfax Public Access (FPA) in Fairfax, Virginia to become a certified television producer. In the course of job hunting, she met the producers of Def Comedy Jam and began handling the merchandising for the comedy shows. She discovered that she enjoyed doing publicity and enrolled at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland to study communications and business.

In 2003, she launched Clarke & Associates in Washington, D.C., where she is currently the president and CEO. Specializing in public relations, event planning, entertainment and media relations, Clarke's clients have included Black Entertainment Television (BET), the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the National Medical Association, the National Council of Negro Women, the Urban League, Boys and Girls Club of America, and Tuskegee Institute. Shaquille O'Neal, Beyonce Knowles, the late Johnny Cochran and Robert Townsend are among her celebrity clients. In 2003, Clarke was named one of the "Fifty Influential Minorities in Business" by the Minority Business & Professionals Network, Inc. In 2006, Clarke received the Black Press All-Star Award for Publicist of the Year.

Clarke is the mother of three children, Huda, Ilyas, and Qasin Mumin.

Clarke was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 10, 2006.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Priscilla Clarke was conducted by Robert Hayden on November 10, 2006, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Public relations chief executive Priscilla Clarke (1960 -) is the president and CEO of Clarke & Associates, LLC, a public relations, event planning, entertainment and media relations company, whose clients have included Beyonce Knowles, Shaquille O'Neal, the National Council of Negro Women and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

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:

Clarke, Priscilla, 1960-

Hayden, Robert (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Clarke, Priscilla, 1960- --Interviews

African American businesswomen--Interviews.

African American public relations consultants--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Public Relations Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Priscilla Clarke, November 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).

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 Priscilla Clarke, Section A2006_138_001_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Priscilla Clarke was born on August 3, 1960 in Swindon, England. Her mother, a white Englishwoman named Dorothy Sharples, was born in London, England circa 1940 to a Scottish woman named Gladys Moskel. Clarke's father, Gilbert Clarke, was born in Poolesville, Maryland in 1936 to Millard E. Clarke and Beulah Clarke. Millard Clarke was a Baptist preacher at Jerusalem Baptist Church and Gethsemane Baptist Church in Laurel, Maryland. Gilbert Clarke worked as a salesman and was stationed in England with the U.S. Air Force when he met Clarke's mother. Clarke's family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts around 1961. Clark also lived in Buffalo, New York as a child and moved back to Springfield circa 1966. When Clarke was around two years old, her parents divorced. Her father married Ophelia Munera and her mother married Al Sale. When Clarke was around eleven years old, her mother's house caught fire and the family was forced into homelessness. In junior high school, Clarke became a martial arts champion.

Interracial marriage.

Divorce.

African American families--Massachusetts--Springfield.

Single parents.

Karate.

Housing--Fires and fire prevention.

Video Oral History Interview with Priscilla Clarke, Section A2006_138_001_002, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

Priscilla Clarke attended Classical Junior High School, Kennedy Junior High School, and Forest Park Junior High School, where she was teased for being biracial. At the age of twelve, Clarke began practicing martial arts, eventually becoming a Canadian Champion and an East Coast Champion and teaching karate classes. Clarke talks about her other childhood jobs, including Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus, Burger King, and a nursing home with her stepmother, Ophelia Munera. She also recalls childhood family trips to Riverside Park and the roller rink. Clarke attended Windson High School in Windsor, Connecticut, where she wanted to become a filmmaker, photographer, writer, politician, and lawyer. Clarke recounts a racist encounter at a Friendly's and being ostracized in junior high school. Clarke graduated in 1978 and enrolled at Western New England College in Springfield, Massachusetts, where she became active in student life and affairs around issues of race.

African American families--Massachusetts--Springfield.

African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Massachusetts--Springfield.

Busing for school integration.

African American college students--Massachusetts--Springfield.

Western New England College.

Teenagers--Work.

Ku Klux Klan (1915-).

Video Oral History Interview with Priscilla Clarke, Section A2006_138_001_003, TRT: 0:27:50 ?

Priscilla Clarke attended college for two and a half years before she became pregnant with her daughter, Huda Mumin, in 1981. Clarke moved to Holyoke, Massachusetts and then Germantown, Maryland. Clarke worked as a designer and seamstress until she bought the Eat to Live Health Food Store in 1988. Clarke owned and ran the store until 2001, when her plans to move locations

were stalled and her mother, Dorothy Sharples, died tragically in a fire. Clarke enrolled in courses at the cable television public access station in Fairfax, Virginia, becoming a certified access television producer with the hopes of working for BET. Clarke's career in public relations started while working with Def Comedy Jam, after which she enrolled at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland to study business and communications. One of her early public relations breakthroughs came when she represented Johnnie Cochran on his visit to Washington, D.C. shortly after the O.J. Simpson trial. She started Clarke & Associates in 2003.

African American businesswomen.

African American mothers.

Parents--Death.

Divorce.

Television--Production and direction.

African American public relations personnel.

Cochran, Johnnie L., 1937-2005.

Video Oral History Interview with Priscilla Clarke, Section A2006_138_001_004, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Priscilla Clarke founded her public relations firm, Clarke & Associates, in 2003. Some of her political clients included the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and Washington, D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty. In 2002, Clarke worked with Oprah Winfrey to fundraise for HistoryMaker Dorothy Height's ninetieth birthday and the National Council of Negro Women. She has also worked with Mathew Knowles and Music World Entertainment, NBA player Muggsy Bogues, the Greater Washington Urban League, the National Medical Association, the National Association of Equal Opportunity and Higher Education (NAFEO), Johnson Publishing Company, BET, The Boys and Girls Club of America, Omarosa, Dreamgirls, the American Music Awards, and Reaching Out to Others Together. Clarke ends the interview by reflecting on her life and career, her hopes and regrets, and how she would like to be remembered.

African American businesswomen.

African American public relations personnel.

Winfrey, Oprah.

National Council of Negro Women.

Height, Dorothy I. (Dorothy Irene), 1912-2010.