

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ione Teresa Vargus

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Vargus, Ione D.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ione Teresa Vargus,
Dates:	December 19, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:46:24).
Abstract:	Academic administrator and african american studies professor Ione Teresa Vargus (1930 -) was the first African American dean in the history of Temple University, and helped found the Family Reunion Institute at Temple University. Vargus was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 19, 2006, in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_182
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator Ione Teresa Dugger Vargus was born on July 19, 1930 in Medford, Massachusetts. The daughter of the late Lt. Col. Edward Dugger and Madeline Dugger, the 1952 Massachusetts Mother of the Year, Vargus has continued her family's dedication to education, family and public service. In 1952, she received her B.A. degree in sociology from Jackson College at Tufts University, and in 1954, she received her M.A. degree from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration. That same year, Vargus began working professionally with families for non-profit organizations. In 1969, she extended her work to include the academic world of higher education. Completing her studies in 1971 at the Florence Heller School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare at Brandeis University, Vargus received her Ph.D.

At Brandeis University, Vargus served as assistant professor in the newly formed Black Studies Department from 1969 to 1971, as well as in the Heller School. Afterwards, she held the position of assistant professor at the University of Illinois where she served as the Director of the School Community Pupils Project. In 1977, Vargus published a book entitled, *Revival of Ideology: The Afro-American Society Movement* and in 1978, she became the first academic African American dean at Temple University. In 1986, Vargus began researching African American family reunions. She interviewed families from the eastern, northern and southern parts of the United States in order to determine the reasons and benefits of family reunions. In addition, she produced a radio documentary on family reunions for station WRTI; as well as organized the Conference on African American Family Reunions. In 1990, Vargus founded the Family Reunion Institute at Temple University, an organization which boasts being the only one of its kind in America to focus exclusively on strengthening extended families. A recognized authority on family reunions, Vargus has been featured in numerous magazines, newspapers and on radio and television shows across the country.

From 1991 to 1993, Vargus served as Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at Temple University. In 2005, Vargus was the keynote speaker at the inauguration of the 2015 Procter & Gamble Black Family Reunion Time

Capsule, which collected artifacts donated by leading Philadelphia businesses, academic institutions and civic groups.

Vargus resides in the Philadelphia area where her daughter, Suzanne Holloman, is the Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education at a community college, and her son is Billy Vargus, the weekend sports anchor for Philadelphia's Fox 29-TV. Vargus also has three granddaughters.

Vargus was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 19, 2006.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ione Teresa Vargus was conducted by Shawn Wilson on December 19, 2006, in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator and african american studies professor Ione Teresa Vargus (1930 -) was the first African American dean in the history of Temple University, and helped found the Family Reunion Institute at Temple University.

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:

Vargus, Ione D.

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Vargus, Ione D.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Temple University

Occupations:

Academic Administrator

African American Studies Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Ione Teresa Vargus, December 19, 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 Ione Teresa Vargus, Section A2006_182_001_001, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Ione Teresa Vargus was born on July 19, 1930 in Medford, Massachusetts to Madeline Kountze Dugger-Kelley and Edward Dugger, Sr. Her maternal grandfather worked for Justice Louis Brandeis and collected taxes from the Curley family. Born in 1897, Vargus' mother was featured in the Medford hall of fame for her athletic accomplishments and attended Sargent School for Physical Education. Vargus' father was born in 1893 in Danville, Virginia, and moved to Massachusetts as a young man. He attended The English High School in Boston, where he excelled at track. He trained at Fort Des Moines Provisional Army Officer Training School and served in World War I under the French Army. By the time of his death in 1939, he was a lieutenant colonel. Vargus' mother was the director of service clubs for black soldiers, and later earned a law degree. She was an active member of the community and a number of black women's clubs, including Lend-A-Hand Club and Daffodil Club. Vargus grew up in Medford with her five siblings.

Video Oral History Interview with Ione Teresa Vargus, Section A2006_182_001_002, TRT: 0:29:21 ?

Ione Teresa Vargus grew up in a home with a sunroom in Medford, Massachusetts' small African American community. Since her mother lived at the service club, and her siblings attended school and work, the community cared for her when she was a young girl. Vargus attended Hervey School and Hobbs Junior High School, where all her teachers were white. She learned African American history at church and at home. Her uncle wrote for two African American newspapers and traced the family's genealogy to the Revolutionary War. He also recorded stories from older members of the community. Vargus' brother was perceived as unintelligent because of his eye condition, but later became a biochemist. He once received a settlement from a major corporation who infringed on his patent. Vargus describes her family's experiences of racial discrimination. Her brother graduated with an engineering degree, but was initially assigned to sanitation duty in the U.S. Air Force, and her sisters could not find work in Medford as teachers.

Video Oral History Interview with Ione Teresa Vargus, Section A2006_182_001_003, TRT: 0:30:19 ?

Ione Teresa Vargus was the only African American student in pre-college courses in high school. She attended Tufts College as it was close to home in Medford, Massachusetts, and graduated with a sociology degree in 1952. She met her husband there, and although they faced discrimination as an interracial couple, her family was accepting. Harriet Wharton encouraged her to pursue social work, and Vargus enrolled in the master's degree program at the University of Chicago, where Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was a Ph.D. student. In Chicago, Vargus sang jazz at a local club and was inspired by concert singer Marian Anderson. She graduated in 1954 and served as a social worker at a services agency in Chicago. She returned to Medford with her husband and two children to escape housing discrimination. In the 1960s, Vargus and the West Medford Civic Association demanded that Medford schools employ black teachers. Their activism resulted in the hiring of Medford's first African

American principal, Shirley Kountze.

Video Oral History Interview with Ione Teresa Vargus, Section A2006_182_001_004, TRT: 0:29:29 ?

Ione Teresa Vargus knew Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a doctoral student in Boston, Massachusetts. After she became a social worker for the City of Boston, Andrew Billingsley encouraged Vargus to pursue her doctoral degree at Brandeis University. She enrolled in 1967. Vargus wrote her dissertation on black students in white universities, and worked with the Brandeis undergraduates on when to stage a takeover of a campus building. She was then hired to teach courses on African American families, music and communities. She also worked with the Soul Cousins, a group of junior high school students who visited churches to sing and share black music history. In Medford, she worked on her sister, Madeleine Dugger Andrews' campaign to become the school board's first black committeeperson. Vargus then moved to Urbana, Illinois, where she led a program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign on parent-teacher collaboration. She describes the park in Medford named in memory of her father.

Video Oral History Interview with Ione Teresa Vargus, Section A2006_182_001_005, TRT: 0:29:53 ?

Ione Teresa Vargus wrote her dissertation, 'The Revival of Ideology,' during the Black Power movement and describes herself as a black nationalist. She joined Temple University as the associate dean of the School of Social Administration in 1978. Simon Slavin mentored her, and she became the university's first woman and first African American dean of an academic school. Interested in African American family reunions, she consulted for the African American Museum in Philadelphia when it honored Philadelphia's historic black families in the city's bicentennial celebration. Vargus established the Family Reunion Institute at Temple University in 1990. She describes the history of African American family reunions. In 1991, Vargus was appointed vice provost, and facilitated the introduction of required courses on racism. She served as a presidential fellow at the university, and retired in 1995 to work in the Family Reunion Institute's administration. Vargus reflects upon the greatest moments in her career.

Video Oral History Interview with Ione Teresa Vargus, Section A2006_182_001_006, TRT: 0:18:15 ?

Ione Teresa Vargus describes the Temple University Family Reunion Institute as her proudest accomplishment, and explains how the conferences held at the institute bring families closer together. She hopes to be remembered as a good mother, and describes her children. At the time of the interview, her son, Bill Vargus, was a sports anchor, and married to weatherwoman Sue Serio. Her daughter, Suzanne Vargus Holloman, was a dean at Montgomery County Community College in Bluebell, Pennsylvania, and had two adopted children. Vargus names her awards from The Philadelphia Foundation and the Tufts University board of trustees as her most memorable, particularly because she sat on the board with a professor for whom she worked as a student in order to pay tuition. She shares her hopes for African American families and talks about the preserving her family's historic papers. Vargus concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.