

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lisa E. Davis

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Davis, Lisa E., 1960- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lisa E. Davis, |
| Dates: | January 8, 2007 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2007 |
| Physical Description: | 4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:56:47). |
| Abstract: | Entertainment lawyer Lisa E. Davis (1960 -) was a partner at Frankfurt Kurnit, Klein & Selz, where her clients included Spike Lee and Terry McMillan. Davis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 8, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2007_004 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Entertainment lawyer Lisa Ellen Davis was born on February 6, 1960 in Queens, New York. Her parents are Gwen Webb, a retired educator and Nat Davis, a jazz musician. She graduated from New Rochelle High School in 1977. In 1981, Davis received her B.A. degree from Harvard University and her J.D. degree from New York University School of Law in 1985.

Davis worked as a law clerk for the Honorable Constance Baker Motley in the United States Federal Court from 1985 to 1986. In 1986, she began working as an associate with the law firm of Kramer Levin. She joined Frankfurt Kurnit, Klein & Selz where she became a partner in 1995. Davis' duties include negotiating financing, production and distribution agreements. Davis' special expertise is in advising clients on exploiting potential markets. She has helped entertainment clients expand into complimentary business, including book and magazine publishing, concert promotion, music, celebrity endorsements and merchandising. Her clients include Spike Lee and Terry McMillan. Davis often speaks on entertainment and legal ethics. She has presented at the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, the Corporate Counsel Women of Color Conference, the Copyright Society, the Internet Conference; and the National Bar Association Convention.

Davis has been quoted in *Elle* magazine, *The New York Times* and *Black Enterprise* magazine. She has been noted as one of America's top black lawyers and one of the top 50 Power Brokers in entertainment by *Black Enterprisemagazine*.

Davis is a member of the New York City Bar, the Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association and the National Bar Association.

Davis was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 8, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lisa E. Davis was conducted by Denise Gines on January 8, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Entertainment lawyer Lisa E. Davis (1960 -) was a partner at Frankfurt Kurnit, Klein & Selz, where her clients included Spike Lee and Terry McMillan.

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:

Davis, Lisa E., 1960-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Davis, Lisa E., 1960- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Entertainment Lawyer

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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 Lisa E. Davis, January 8, 2007. 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 Lisa E. Davis, Section A2007_004_001_001, TRT: 0:29:11 ?

Lisa E. Davis was born on February 6, 1960 in New York City to Gwen Martin Webb and Nathaniel Davis, Jr. Davis' paternal grandfather, Nathaniel Davis, Sr., was a successful businessman who owned properties in New York City and Las Vegas. His family was the first African American household in St. Albans, New York. Davis' father sold the family dry cleaning businesses after his father's death, and performed as a jazz musician in Japan and Saudi Arabia. Davis' mother was born in New York City's Harlem neighborhood to diner owner Herbert Martin and Iris Martin, a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; and became a teacher and administrator after graduating from

Hunter College and Baruch College. Davis' parents divorced when she was young, and her mother married Arnold Webb. As a child, Davis studied modern dance, and enjoyed reading and writing. She also remembers being bussed to the majority white P.S. 255 in Brooklyn the morning after Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination.

African American families--New York (State)--New York.

African American businesspeople--New York (State)--New York.

Saint Albans (New York, N.Y.)

African American musicians.

African American grandmothers.

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa E. Davis, Section A2007_004_001_002, TRT: 0:29:58 ?

Lisa E. Davis attended Albert Leonard Junior High School when her family moved to New Rochelle, New York. Davis listened to The Temptations and The Jackson 5 on WBLS Radio and WLIB Radio with her childhood friend, attorney Dayna Cunningham; and aspired to become lawyer after learning about Thurgood Marshall. At New Rochelle High School, Davis excelled in her Advanced Placement courses; was president of the black culture club and editor of the literary magazine; and attended prom with New York's future governor, David A. Paterson. Her guidance counselor encouraged her to attend Harvard University. There, Davis majored in English, and her professors included biologist E.O. Wilson and Harvard's first Afro-American studies department chair, Ewart Guinier. She wrote for The Harvard Crimson alongside Newsweek editor, Mark Whitaker, but eventually decided to participate in protests rather than write about them. Upon graduating, Davis received the Root-Tilden Scholarship to attend New York University School of Law.

Moving, Household--New York Region.

Civil rights movements--United States.

Career development.

African American high school students--New York (State)--New York.

Paterson, David A.

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa E. Davis, Section A2007_004_001_003, TRT: 0:29:11 ?

Lisa E. Davis attended New York University School of Law, and was a summer associate at Cravath, Swaine and Moore, LLP in New York City. She experienced gender discrimination there, and chose not to return upon graduating in 1985. Instead, after a clerkship with Judge Constance Baker Motley, Davis was hired as a litigation associate at Kramer, Levin, Nessen, Kamin & Frankel. She became interested in working as an entertainment lawyer; and, in 1988, secured a position at Frankfurt Garbus Klein & Selz, PC with the help of Loretha C. Jones, a friend from law school. There, Davis was trained in entertainment law, and went on to represent 'Malcolm X' director Spike Lee. She also worked with hip hop group Public Enemy; Malcolm X's wife, Betty Shabazz; author Terry McMillan; and filmmaker Charles Randolph-Wright. As a member of the Organization of Concerned New Yorkers, Davis petitioned for David A. Paterson's election as a state senator, and for Reverend Jesse L. Jackson's presidential campaign in 1988.

Motley, Constance Baker, 1921-2005.

Hairdressing of African Americans.

Sexism in language--United States.

Lee, Spike.

Professional training for lawyers.

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa E. Davis, Section A2007_004_001_004, TRT: 0:28:27 ?

Lisa E. Davis married her husband, filmmaker Anthony Jamison, in 1994. Prior to the birth of their children, Marcus Jamison and Noelle Jamison, Davis was an active board member of the Hurston/Wright Foundation and The East Harlem School at Exodus House in New York City. She enjoyed cooking for her family's Christmas celebrations, and was an avid runner, who participated in the New York City Marathon twice. Davis describes her admiration of criminal defense attorney Theodore Wells and Judge Thurgood Marshall, as well as her role in preserving African American contributions to the entertainment industry. Davis shares her message to future generations; advice for young lawyers; and concerns for the African American community. She also reflects upon her life and legacy. Davis concludes the interview by sharing her goals for the future, which included writing a novel, and implementing the International Baccalaureate curriculum in her children's school district.

Branded entertainment.

Celebrities as artists.

Hurston/Wright Foundation.

Celebrities--United States.