

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Glenn Harris

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Harris, Glenn, 1947-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Glenn Harris,
Dates:	February 6, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	8 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:59:31).
Abstract:	Television sports host Glenn Harris (1947 -) hosted numerous sports talk shows, including Let's Talk Sports on Howard University's WHUR-FM and Community News and Sports on Channel 4 in Washington, D.C. He also provided sports commentary for FOX WTTG-TV, later anchoring NEWSCHANNEL 8's Sports Talk. Harris was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 6, 2007, in Temple Hills, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_047
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Sports talk show host Robert "Glenn" Harris was born on April 24, 1947 in Queens, New York. The son of electrical worker Pleasant Samuel Harris and June Pucket Harris, he grew up in Southeast Washington, D.C. with his brother, Ron. Harris loved sports and in 1958 won the Washington, D.C. City Little League Championship. He attended Birney Elementary School, Turner Elementary School, Garfield Elementary School and Douglass Junior High School. At Anacostia High School, Harris and his friend, Reggie Rucker, were mentored by Dave Brown. Graduating in 1965, Harris played baseball with the Washington Black Sox and briefly attended Miami's Dade County Junior College. From 1970 to 1974, Harris attended Howard University on a baseball scholarship and graduated with his B.S. degree in physical education and urban education. Under the guidance of Chuck Hinton, Howard won the MEAC Baseball Championship twice during Harris' playing years.

In the mid-1970s when Harris was public address announcer for Howard University's athletic teams, he was discovered by black radio entrepreneur, Dewey Hughes. Harris began hosting the popular *Let's Talk Sports* on Howard's WHUR-FM in 1979 and went on to become Sports Director for the station. Harris has hosted *Community News and Sports* on Channel 4 and provided sports commentary for FOX WTTG-TV. Anchoring the only live nightly sports call-in show in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area, *NEWSCHANNEL 8's Sports Talk*, Harris earned back-to-back awards for "Best Year-Round Sports Coverage" from Virginia's Associated Press. His feature "Anacostia at the Crossroads" garnered an award from the National Association of Black Journalists in 1995.

A streetwise, knowledgeable and well-liked authority on local and national sports, Harris participated in Howard University's 1993 Forum on Black Athletics. In 1995, Harris received the "Glenn Brenner Award" for outstanding contributions to young people in the community at the Regional Emmy Awards. Inducted into Howard University's Athletics Hall of Fame in 1995, Harris has also received the Outstanding Washingtonian Award.

Washington Mayor Anthony Williams proclaimed June 6, 2003 as Glenn Harris Day.

Harris was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 6, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Glenn Harris was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 6, 2007, in Temple Hills, Maryland, and was recorded on 8 Betacame SP videocassettes. Television sports host Glenn Harris (1947 -) hosted numerous sports talk shows, including Let's Talk Sports on Howard University's WHUR-FM and Community News and Sports on Channel 4 in Washington, D.C. He also provided sports commentary for FOX WTTG-TV, later anchoring NEWSCHANNEL 8's Sports Talk.

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:

Harris, Glenn, 1947-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Harris, Glenn, 1947- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Television Sports Host

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers|SportsMakers

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 Glenn Harris, February 6, 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 Glenn Harris, Section A2007_047_001_001, TRT: 0:30:40 ?
Glenn Harris was born on April 24, 1947 in New York City to June Puckett Harris and Pleasant Harris. His mother was born in 1927 to white parents,

psychologist Kitchen Puckett and nurse Kathleen Knott, at New York City's Bellevue Hospital. Orphaned at a young age, she lived at the hospital until she was nine years old, when she was adopted by an African American couple. Harris' mother went on to graduate in 1945 from Bayside High School in Bayside, New York. His father born in 1923, and was raised by Harris' paternal grandparents, Lavinia Gannaway Harris and carpenter Pleasant C. Harris, in Fine Creek Mills, Virginia. Harris' parents met in New York City, and moved to Washington, D.C., where his father worked as a landscaper for the Potomac Electric Power Company. They raised Harris and his five younger siblings in an impoverished household in the Southeast section of Washington, D.C. He remembers his early understanding of race, and his mother's identity as a member of the black community.

Video Oral History Interview with Glenn Harris, Section A2007_047_001_002, TRT: 0:30:22 ?

Glenn Harris grew up in the Southeast section of Washington, D.C., where his family belonged to the Matthews Memorial Baptist Church. He also attended church services with paternal grandmother, Lavinia Gannaway Harris, while visiting her home in Powhatan County, Virginia. His mother, June Puckett Harris, worked as a secretary for the U.S. military, and was a strict disciplinarian. From an early age, Harris played sports with the children in his neighborhood, and admired baseball players like Bob Feller, Willie Mays, Roberto Clemente, Willard Marshall and Hank Aaron. He went on to win the city championship with his Little League baseball team. Harris attended Washington, D.C.'s James G. Birney Elementary School, Anita J. Turner Elementary School and James A. Garfield Elementary School; followed by Frederick Douglass Junior High School and Anacostia High School. Under the influence of his mother and his teacher, Miss Frye, he was exposed to the music of Sergei Rachmaninoff, Frank Sinatra and Johnny Mathis.

Video Oral History Interview with Glenn Harris, Section A2007_047_001_003, TRT: 0:30:04 ?

Glenn Harris excelled in the sports programs at his schools in Washington, D.C. He struggled academically, but worked hard to maintain good grades in order to play on the football and baseball teams. At Anacostia High School, Harris was mentored by Coach David Brown, whose basketball team included future professional player Elgin Baylor. During this time, Harris became friends with Reggie Rucker, who later played for the New England Patriots and the Cleveland Browns. He also befriended sportscaster James Brown and basketball player Kermit Washington, who lived in his neighborhood. Eventually, Harris transferred to Frank W. Ballou Senior High School, where he became the baseball team's catcher, and played alongside James Jenkins. He also joined the football team. Upon graduating from high school, Harris considered pursuing a career in minor league baseball. He recalls lessons from his sports experiences, and remembers his acquaintance with professional athletes Jim Williams and Vince Colbert.

Video Oral History Interview with Glenn Harris, Section A2007_047_001_004, TRT: 0:30:39 ?

Glenn Harris graduated in 1965 from Anacostia High School in Washington, D.C. He considered playing for the Pittsburgh Pirates after attracting the attention of the team's scout, Joe Consoli; but instead played briefly for the Washington Black Sox alongside William Jones. After leaving the team in 1966, Harris worked for a time as a correctional officer, and then enrolled at Miami-Dade Junior College in Miami, Florida. There, he joined the baseball team, which included Mickey Rivers and Glenn Borgmann. After an altercation with the coach, Tony Simone, Harris was removed from the team in 1969. He returned home to Washington, D.C., where he was recruited by Dr. Arnold

McKnight to enroll at Howard University. There, he played Division One baseball alongside Rock Newman, Robert Woodland and Curtis "Butch" White. Harris majored in physical education and urban recreation administration, and studied under professors Suzanne Saul, Rolin Sidwell and Samuel Barnes.

Video Oral History Interview with Glenn Harris, Section A2007_047_001_005, TRT: 0:30:06 ?

Glenn Harris was a student at Howard University during the 1970s, and heard speeches given by activists like Dick Gregory and Minister Louis Farrakhan in Washington, D.C. He played on the university's baseball team under Coach Chuck Hinton, and met Negro league baseball players like Judy Johnson and Buck O'Neil. Harris began his broadcasting career at Howard University, where he hosted a show on WHUR Radio, and served as the public address announcer at sporting events. He eventually co-hosted the 'Let's Talk Sports' radio program with Rock Newman, and went on to host a sports talk show on Washington D.C.'s WRC-TV alongside Sue Simmons and Rudolph Brewington. At the behest of his mentor, radio personality Dewey Hughes, Harris joined the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists early in his career. He recalls meeting Oprah Winfrey and Stedman Graham; political commentator Armstrong Williams; and Herb Fame of Peaches and Herb. He also reflects upon the legacy of radio personality Petey Greene.

Video Oral History Interview with Glenn Harris, Section A2007_047_001_006, TRT: 0:29:32 ?

Glenn Harris became a full time sport broadcaster during the mid-1970s, while working at WHUR Radio in Washington, D.C. In 1977, he hosted a sports talk show on WOL Radio. During his career, Harris interviewed numerous celebrity athletes, including professional basketball players Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan. At this point in the interview, Harris talks about the careers of Washington Wizards teammates Michael Jordan and Kwame Brown. He also remembers the deaths of Jay Bias and Len Bias, the latter of whom was selected in the first round of the NBA draft. Harris talks about football quarterback Doug Williams, who was the first African American member of the Washington Redskins to play in a Super Bowl game; and describes the Washington Redskins' history of racial discrimination, including the team's refusal to hire African American players until the 1960s. In 1973, Harris married his first wife, with whom he had two children, Jason Harris and India Harris.

Video Oral History Interview with Glenn Harris, Section A2007_047_001_007, TRT: 0:29:44 ?

Glenn Harris hosted the 'Sports Talk' program on WJLA-TV in Washington, D.C. On the show, he interviewed many prominent sports figures, like Trent Green, Darrell Green, Earnest Byner and Charles Mann. At this point in the interview, Harris talks about the integration of the Washington Redskins team during the 1960s, and the Redskins' early African American team members, including Bobby Mitchell and Charley Taylor. He also talks about Eldridge Dickey, who was the first African American quarterback drafted into the NFL; and Dickey's successors, including quarterbacks James Harris, Doug Williams, Sandy Stephens and Chuck Ealey. During his career, Harris collaborated with sports broadcasters Tim Brant, Phil Chenier, Steve Buckhantz and Michael Wilbon. He also mentored sports talk show hosts James Brown and Gus Johnson, who went on to work for CBS Sports and FOX. Harris concludes this part of the interview by describing his hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Glenn Harris, Section A2007_047_001_008, TRT: 0:28:24 ?

Glenn Harris gave motivational speeches at numerous elementary schools, Boys Clubs of America and churches during his career as a sports broadcaster. He reflects upon his life and legacy, his personal relationships and how he would

like to be remembered.