

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Monica Cost

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cost, Monica, 1971-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Monica Cost,
Dates:	April 10, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:04:52).
Abstract:	Real estate broker Monica Cost (1971 -) was the first African American female real estate broker for a major real estate firm in Massachusetts. Cost was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 10, 2007, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_130
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Real estate broker Monica Diane Cost was born on January 18, 1971 in Atmore, Alabama to Veronica Mason Hairston and Chalmers Hairston, III. Growing up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Cost attended Samson Freedman Pre-School, Anna Blankston (A.B.) Day School, Abington Friends School and Baldie Middle School. Studying and working at Seafood America, Cost graduated fifth in her class from Lankenau College Preparatory School in 1988. At Hampton University, where she attended college for three years, Cost studied accounting and held internships at Mellon Bank and Prudential Insurance. Cost graduated in 1994, from Temple University with her B.S. degree in accounting and finance.

Hired by Prudential Insurance first as a healthcare benefits analyst then as an auditor, Cost traveled the country studying and correcting Prudential's systems and controls. In 1996, Cost moved to Boston, Massachusetts, and joined TJX Companies as an auditor. Cost, while serving as TJX's associate human relations officer, started diversity groups for women and people of color in 1998. In 1999, Cost was appointed finance analyst and in 2000, accounting supervisor. Accepting a job with Reebok in 2000, Cost was mentored by Jimmy Jones in human relations, and served as financial analyst, senior financial analyst and compensation analyst; she also participated in The Partnership, a leadership program to support aspiring people of color in the corporate world. In 2004, Cost joined Cushman and Wakefield and became the first African American and one of the youngest individuals to hold the operations manager position within that organization. Cost also became the first African American broker in the New England area for Cushman & Wakefield and the first African American female broker in a major real estate firm in Massachusetts.

Cost served on the boards of The Partnership and the Crittendon Women's Union; she also was a participant on the advisory board of the Epiphany School and the planning committee for the Paul and Phyllis Fireman One Family Campaign, mentoring one of their scholars. Cost served as president of The Partnership Alumni organization and chaired the Girl Scouts' Leading Women Awards. In 2006, Cost was a Leading Woman herself; in 2000 she was a YMCA Black Achiever; and in 2004 the Chamber of Commerce Future Leader. "The Boston Herald" named Cost

one of The Hub's Future Leaders. Cost counsels young professionals on how to succeed in business through her consulting firm, Evidently Assured (www.evidentlyassured.com). She has also been featured as a motivational speaker at Northeastern University, Boston University and the University of Suffolk.

Cost is the author of the blog "Out of Living in the Land of Make Believe."

A longtime resident of the Boston area, Cost is married to Donald M. Cost with two sons, Christopher and Cameron.

Monica Diane Cost was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 10, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Monica Cost was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 10, 2007, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Real estate broker Monica Cost (1971 -) was the first African American female real estate broker for a major real estate firm in Massachusetts.

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:

Cost, Monica, 1971-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Cost, Monica, 1971- --Interviews

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

Real estate agents--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Real Estate Broker

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Monica Cost, April 10, 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 Monica Cost, Section A2007_130_001_001, TRT: 0:30:07 ?

Monica Cost describes her family background. Her mother, Veronica Hairston, was born in 1947 in Atmore, Alabama to brick mason and artist Jewel Mason and cosmetologist Addie Watson Mason. Veronica attended the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, where she met Cost's father, Chalmers Hairston III. Chalmers was born in 1946 in Brooklyn, New York to aspiring pianist Chalmers Hairston II and Nurse Mary Riley Hairston. After Cost was born in Atmore on January 18, 1971, the family moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where her father served in the U.S. Coast Guard. He disappeared when Cost was five, and she grew up with her sister and her mother. In Pennsylvania, Cost's mother received her M.A. degree in education from Beaver College in Glenside, Pennsylvania and worked in public schools. Cost recalls her earliest childhood memory and the sights, sounds, and smells of childhood in Philadelphia's Mount Airy neighborhood. She also describes the roles of music and church growing up, and her childhood personality.

African American families--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia.

African American single mothers.

African American single parents.

African American churches.

African American children--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--Social life and customs.

Video Oral History Interview with Monica Cost, Section A2007_130_001_002, TRT: 0:30:08 ?

Monica Cost recalls her education and early career. She attended Samson Freedman Pre-School and Anna Blakiston Day School in Philadelphia; Abington Friends School in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania; and then Baldi Middle School and Lankenau High School in Philadelphia. Cost recalls working as a waitress and participating in her mother's Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She also recalls her early aspirations of becoming a businesswoman and how she became a real estate broker. Cost graduated from Lankenau in 1988 and enrolled at Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia, interning during the summer at the Prudential Insurance Company in Philadelphia. Senior year, she transferred to Temple University in Philadelphia. She recalls influential figures throughout her education including an African American studies professor at Temple University. Cost graduated with an accounting degree in 1994 and worked as an auditor for Prudential until she met her husband. In 1996, she began working for TJX Companies in Boston, Massachusetts.

African Americans--Education (Elementary).

African Americans--Education (Secondary).

African Americans--Education (Higher).

African American women--Massachusetts--Boston.

African American couples.

African American youth--Social life and customs.

Auditing.

High school students--Employment.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Hampton University (Va.).
Temple University.
Prudential Insurance Company of America.
TJX Companies.
Executives--United States.
Corporations--United States--Finance.

Video Oral History Interview with Monica Cost, Section A2007_130_001_003, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Monica Cost recounts her career in finance and real estate. She describes working in associate relations at TJX Companies in Boston, Massachusetts, where she established diversity groups for women and people of color, before returning to finance. In 2002, she moved to Reebok, where she was mentored by former NFL defensive end Jimmie Jones and worked as a human resources analyst. In 2004, with the help of Boston's The Partnership, Inc. and its CEO, Benaree P. Wiley, she became operations manager for the firm of Cushman & Wakefield. Cost then recounts how she became the first black female real estate broker at a major real estate firm in 2006. She describes her job and how she negotiated a field dominated by white males. She also talks about her biggest client, Boston's John Hancock Tower, and how she connects with clients on a personal level. Cost talks about her company, Evidently Assured, which provides professional image consulting.

TJX Companies.
African American women--Massachusetts--Boston.
African American businesspeople.
Cushman & Wakefield of Massachusetts.
Real estate business.
Diversity in the workplace.

Video Oral History Interview with Monica Cost, Section A2007_130_001_004, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Monica Cost reflects upon her life and legacy. She talks about her hopes of writing a book, continuing her firm Evidently Assured, and becoming a public speaker. She also provides her advice for aspiring brokers. Cost describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community and praises the Efficacy Institute's efforts to inculcate a growth mindset in underprivileged youth. She reflects upon overcoming obstacles in her life, her career, and what she would do differently if given the opportunity. Cost talks about her personal and professional legacy; about her family, including her husband Donald M. Cost and her children Christopher and Cameron; and about her friendship with the late Daynese Jimerson-Forsey. Cost also describes how she would like to be remembered and narrates her photographs.

African American families--Massachusetts--Boston.
Finance--Vocational guidance.
Banks and banking--Vocational guidance.

Video Oral History Interview with Monica Cost, Section A2007_130_001_005, TRT: 0:02:57 ?

Monica Cost narrates her photographs.