

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with B. B. De Laine

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	De Laine, B. B., 1937-2012
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with B. B. De Laine,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 21, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:50:17).
<b>Abstract:</b>	High school administrator B. B. De Laine (1937 - 2012 ) spent more than thirty years working for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. De Laine was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 21, 2007, in Charlotte, North Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_183
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator Brumit Belton De Laine or B.B. De Laine was born on October 1, 1937 in Columbia, South Carolina to Mattie Belton De Laine, a teacher, and Joseph Armstrong De Laine, a minister, teacher, and community activist. De Laine attended segregated elementary schools, and during his childhood, his father spearheaded a civil rights protest against the segregated school and transportation systems in Clarendon County, South Carolina. As a youth, De Laine witnessed the protests and social tensions that led to the *Briggs v. Elliott* school desegregation case that was eventually bundled with *Brown v. Board of Education*. Following the U.S. Supreme Court decision, De Laine witnessed widespread vandalism and terror perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan. He witnessed the burning of his father's church and the escape of his family to New York City.

De Laine graduated from Carver Public High School in 1955. He attended Howard University for one half of a year and then transferred to Johnson C. Smith University where he got involved in and was one of three primary organizers of the lunch counter sit-in demonstrations in Charlotte, North Carolina. He earned his B.A. degree in psychology and economics from Johnson C. Smith University in 1960.

De Laine accepted a job as a bus driver in New York City. In 1964, he graduated from New York University with a master's degree in safety, and in 1965, De Laine began teaching in the Chappaqua, New York schools. The following academic year, De Laine moved back to North Carolina with his wife, Edith Strickland De Laine, and three children where he accepted a teaching position in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System at Garinger High School in 1965. De Laine was the first African American teacher at Garinger High School. In 1969, De Laine became Director of Driver Education for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. In 1977, De Laine completed a sixth year certificate from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, earning him advanced certification in school administration. After more than thirty years in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, De Laine retired in 1996. Soon after, he joined the Board of Directors for the Swann Fellowship.

De Laine resides in Charlotte, where he serves on the Board of Directors for the Briggs-DeLaine-Pearson

Foundation.

De Laine was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 21, 2007.

B.B. De Laine passed away on June 14, 2012.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with B. B. De Laine was conducted by Cheryl Butler on June 21, 2007, in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. High school administrator B. B. De Laine (1937 - 2012 ) spent more than thirty years working for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

De Laine, B. B., 1937-2012

Butler, Cheryl (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

De Laine, B. B., 1937-2012 --Interviews

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Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

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Occupations:

High School Administrator

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HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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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 B. B. De Laine, June 21, 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).

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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.

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Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with B. B. De Laine, Section A2007\_183\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:33 ?

B. B. De Laine was born on October 1, 1937 in Columbia, South Carolina to Mattie Belton De Laine and Joseph A. De Laine, Sr. Both sides of De Laine's family originated in South Carolina, where his maternal grandfather was a farmer in Fairfield County, and his paternal grandfather served as a minister in Clarendon County. After marrying, De Laine's parents settled in the African American section of Summerton, South Carolina, where they raised three children, of whom De Laine was the youngest. He began his education at the Liberty Hill School, where his father was the principal and two of his aunts were teachers. In the third grade, he transferred to the Scotts Branch School; where, as the smallest student in his class, he faced bullying. De Laine's mother was a teacher there, and sometimes punished him at home for a friend's troublemaking at school. From an early age, De Laine was influenced by his father, who brought him on ministerial visits and forbade him from patronizing segregated businesses.

Video Oral History Interview with B. B. De Laine, Section A2007\_183\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:46 ?

B. B. De Laine's father, minister and civic leader Joseph A. De Laine, Sr., was respected by both the black and white citizens of Summerton, South Carolina. There, De Laine's family lived near the all-black Scotts Branch School, where he was a student. During the week, his cousins boarded at his home, as most African American families lived a long distance from the school. When a dam flooded the main road to the school, the black children of Summerton were forced to walk even farther. Eventually, De Laine's neighbor, Levi Pearson, sued the county school board to secure a bus for the African American students. De Laine's father lent his support to the case, which was ultimately dismissed on a technicality. Because of his role in the lawsuit, De Laine's father received death threats from the town's white supremacists. De Laine also remembers the lynching of one of his father's congregants, which occurred when De Laine was young.

Video Oral History Interview with B. B. De Laine, Section A2007\_183\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:45 ?

B. B. De Laine moved with his family to Lake City, South Carolina at twelve years old. To circumvent school desegregation, the city built Carver High School, an all-black school with updated facilities, in 1950; and De Laine enrolled the following year. During this time, De Laine's father, Joseph A. De Laine, Sr., supported the school desegregation case of Briggs v. Elliott, which was combined with Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in the U.S. Supreme Court. The court declared racially separate schools to be inherently unequal during De Laine's junior year, and ordered the desegregation of all public schools around the time of his graduation in 1955. De Laine matriculated at Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina; but, after his father fled to New York in the face of white reprisals, was sent to live with Dr. Robert W. Mance, Jr. in Washington D.C. De Laine attended Howard University for one semester, and then transferred to Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with B. B. De Laine, Section A2007\_183\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:05 ?

B. B. De Laine attended Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina from 1956. Because of his leadership on campus and his father's civil rights legacy, De Laine was asked by Charles Jones and Heyward Davenport to help lead demonstrations at Charlotte's department stores, including F.W. Woolworth Company, Belk and S.H. Kress and Co. At a sit-in in 1960, De Laine met student demonstrator Edith Strickland De Laine, whom he later married. De Laine graduated later that year; and, shortly after, the students succeeded in integrating downtown Charlotte. Then, De Laine moved to New York City,

where he worked for the welfare department and as a part time bus driver. He took courses at New York University to prepare for a career as a driving instructor, and obtained a master's degree in 1964. He then began looking for work to provide for his wife and three children, Boris De Laine, Brenna De Laine McQuilla and Buane De Laine.

Video Oral History Interview with B. B. De Laine, Section A2007\_183\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:08 ?

B. B. De Laine considered teaching driver's education in New York City, but instead returned to Charlotte, North Carolina, where he had been active in the student protest movement. By this time, Charlotte's public accommodations were integrated, although church congregations were still racially divided. The city began integrating the faculty of formerly all-white schools in 1965, and De Laine was the sole African American instructor at Garinger High School when he was hired as the driving teacher. He faced hostility from the parents, but was supported by Principal Ed Saunders, who did not tolerate discrimination from the staff or students. After two years, De Laine was promoted to director of the driver's education and safety programs for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The district also began busing white students to historically black schools, and tasked De Laine with supervising the bus rides and quelling fights between classes. The tumultuous desegregation process lasted through the mid-1970s.

Video Oral History Interview with B. B. De Laine, Section A2007\_183\_001\_006, TRT: 0:26:00 ?

B. B. De Laine earned a certificate in school administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1977, and continued working in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools until his retirement in the 1990s. During his career, De Laine oversaw the district's full desegregation, and sent a group of students to Boston, Massachusetts to help quell the busing crisis there. During the 1980s, school desegregation was deprioritized in North Carolina and across the country. In 1999, shortly after De Laine's retirement, Judge Robert Daniel Potter ordered the school district to stop using race in pupil assignments; and, in the following decade, De Laine witnessed the resegregation of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. De Laine reflects upon his family's legacy, including that of his father, who often visited De Laine at work to witness the improvements in education equality. De Laine concludes the interview by narrating his photographs with his brother, Joseph A. De Laine, Jr.