

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Veronica Claypool

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Claypool, Veronica, 1948-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool,
Dates:	October 12, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:47:49).
Abstract:	Entertainment manager Veronica Claypool (1948 -) became the managing director of the Theatre Development Fund, the United States' largest not-for-profit theatrical service organization in 1998. She has served as company manager for several staged shows, including the 1994 national tour of "Porgy and Bess." Claypool was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 12, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_287
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

General manager Veronica Claypool was born in Indianapolis, Indiana to Margie and Leander Warner. Claypool attended Shortridge Public High School in Indianapolis, where she graduated in 1966, and moved to New York City in 1970, where she attended Hunter College.

In 1973, Claypool worked on the production team for the tour and live broadcast of the Jackson 5 from Senegal, West Africa. One year later, Claypool became an associate producer for Metromedia Television in New York City, producing such programs as *Midday Live*, a daily talk show, *Wonderama*, a live children's show and *People of Paradise*, a documentary filmed in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Claypool joined McCann and Nugent Productions in 1977, working as company manager for over twenty Broadway productions, which included *Mass Appeal*, *Dracula* and *The Gin Game*, as well as the original 1976 Houston Grand Opera European tour of *Porgy and Bess*. In 1981, Claypool left McCann and Nugent when she was employed as manager for the Broadway and national tours of *Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music*, including a live broadcast of the performance from the Nederlander Theatre on Broadway. In 1983 and 1984, Claypool was general manager for the Las Vegas national and international tours of the show, *Sophisticated Ladies*. Upon completion of this tour, Claypool worked as general manager, for *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, starring Lily Tomlin. 1988 marked Claypool's move to Los Angeles where she worked as general manager for the Center Theatre Group/ Ahmanson and Doolittle Theatres, working on such performances as *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Into the Woods*, and August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*. In 1990, Claypool worked as assistant production auditor for the Columbia-Tri Star release *The Fisher King*. The next year, Claypool moved to Blanki & Bodi Productions, working on such pieces *Tube Test Two* for ABC Productions and *Silent Killer: Women and Heart Disease* for the American Heart Association. For the next two years, Claypool was the general manager for *OBA OBA*, a Brazilian production that toured both nationally and internationally.

Claypool managed the Houston Grand Opera tour of *Porgy and Bess*. After managing this tour, she served as general manager of the Jackie Mason show, *Love Thy Neighbor*. In 1997, she became managing director of Theatre Development Fund, the country's largest nonprofit theatrical service organization. In 2005, Claypool married John Gordon Butler in Kona, Hawaii.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Veronica Claypool was conducted by Adrienne Jones on October 12, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Entertainment manager Veronica Claypool (1948 -) became the managing director of the Theatre Development Fund, the United States' largest not-for-profit theatrical service organization in 1998. She has served as company manager for several staged shows, including the 1994 national tour of "Porgy and Bess."

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:

Claypool, Veronica, 1948-

Jones, Adrienne (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Claypool, Veronica, 1948- --Interviews

African American theatrical managers.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Theatre Development Fund

Occupations:

Theater Director

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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 Veronica Claypool, October 12, 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 Veronica Claypool, Section A2007_287_001_001, TRT: 0:29:15
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Veronica Claypool describes her family background and childhood in Indianapolis, Indiana. Her mother, Margie Warner, was born in Indianapolis in 1926 to Willy Lee Terry and Delia Mae Terry. Claypool's maternal grandfather was a Pullman porter before working at a bakery. Claypool's father, Leander Warner, was born in Maysville, Kentucky in 1922 to farmers George Washington Warner and Mary Warner. Claypool's paternal grandfather, who was born in 1895, had memories of early-twentieth-century chain gangs. Claypool recalls visiting her paternal grandparents in Kentucky as a child, and the sights, sounds, and smells of growing up in Indianapolis. In Indiana, her mother was a public retirement account manager. Claypool remembers her childhood home and her parents' love of jazz music. She attended Scott United Methodist Church with her family, participating in the choir and youth ministry. Claypool describes her grade school years at P.S. 41 and Shortridge Public High School. She graduated high school in 1966.

African American families--Indiana--Indianapolis.

Indianapolis--Indiana--Social life and customs.

African American churches.

African American high school students.

Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool, Section A2007_287_001_002, TRT: 0:29:31
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Veronica Claypool describes her theater production career in the 1970s. After moving from Indianapolis, Indiana to New York City in 1970, she became an audience developer for CBS and enrolled in night classes at Hunter College. From CBS, she moved to Black Enterprise magazine, working as HistoryMaker Earl Graves' administrative assistant. Claypool then toured Senegal with the Jackson Five before accepting a job at Metromedia Television, where she was an associate producer for 'Midday Live,' a day time talk show which featured guests like HistoryMakers Jesse L. Jackson and Geoffrey Holder. Claypool subsequently moved into Broadway production as an apprentice with McCann and Nugent Productions, working on 'Barnum,' 'Dracula,' and 'Porgy and Bess.' After three years, she passed a union exam to qualify as a Broadway manager. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Claypool produced Lena Horne's 'The Lady and Her Music' and 'Sophisticated Ladies,' a Duke Ellington revue featuring HistoryMaker Dee Dee Bridgewater.

African American theatrical managers--New York (State)--New York.

Performing arts--Public relations.

CBS Broadcasting Inc.--Employees.

Jackson 5 (Musical group).

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

Broadway (New York, N.Y.).

Theater and society--United States--21st century.

Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool, Section A2007_287_001_003, TRT: 0:29:14
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Veronica Claypool describes her theater industry career in the 1980s. While working on HistoryMaker Vy Higginsen's 'Mama, I Want to Sing,' she met Lily Tomlin. This led her to produce Tomlin's one-woman show 'The Search for

Intelligent Life in the Universe.' Claypool talks about the challenges of commercial theater production and about how to grow African American audiences. After touring with Tomlin in 1985, she moved to Los Angeles, California to work on shows such as 'The Phantom of the Opera' and 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses.' Claypool then did a run of 'Porgy and Bess' in Houston, Texas. Returning to New York City, she managed 'The Jackie Mason Show' before moving to the Theatre Development Fund (TDF). As TDF's Chief Operations Officer, she oversaw the TKTS Booth program to sponsor affordable theater and programs promoting theater appreciation in New York public schools. She has selected Tony Award and Lucille Lortel Award nominees, and has also worked with HistoryMakers Woodie King and Stephanie Hughley.

African American theatrical managers--United States.

Tomlin, Lily.

Theatre Development Fund.

Off-Broadway theater--Awards.

Performing arts--Audiences.

Video Oral History Interview with Veronica Claypool, Section A2007_287_001_004, TRT: 0:19:49
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Veronica Claypool reflects upon her nonprofit work in the public humanities, on her life, and on her legacy. She works with the Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations, a statewide advocacy organization working to increase funding for theater and other public arts, and with the League of Professional Theatre Women, which brings attention to issues confronting women in the field. While working for the New York State Council on the Arts, she met business consultant Jack Butler, and the two married in 2005. Claypool reflects upon her contributions to the theater industry over her three-decade career. She then showcases the work of opera singer Kenn Hicks. Hicks has worked with bassist Marcus Miller and HistoryMaker Herbie Hancock. She concludes by narrating her photographs.

Nonprofit organizations--New York (State)--New York.

Art--Study and teaching.

African Americans--Marriage.

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection).

League of Professional Theatre Women.