

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paula Ann Sneed

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Sneed, Paula Ann, 1947-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paula Ann Sneed,
Dates:	February 19, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:28:43).
Abstract:	Corporate executive Paula Ann Sneed (1947 -) held a number of high-ranking positions within Kraft Foods, Inc., ranging from Senior Vice President of Kraft's North American Food Service Division to Executive Vice President of the Desserts Division. In 2006, she retired as Kraft's Executive Vice President of Global Marketing Resources and Initiatives. Sneed was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 19, 2008, in Lake Forest, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_020
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Retired corporate executive Paula Ann Sneed was born on November 10, 1947 in Everett, Massachusetts. She is the only child of Thomas E. and Furman Mary (Turner) Sneed. Sneed was raised in Malden, Massachusetts and attended Charles A. Daniel Elementary School and Malden High School. Sneed earned her B.A. degree from Simmons College, a women's liberal arts college in Boston, Massachusetts. From 1969 to 1971, Sneed worked as the Educational Supervisor and Female Coordinator for the Outreach Program for Problem Drinkers, an alcohol-rehabilitation program. From 1971 to 1972, she worked as the Director of Plans for Program Development and Evaluation at the Ecumenical Center in Roxbury. Between 1972 and 1975, Sneed served as the Program Coordinator for the Boston Sickle Cell Center at Boston City Hospital. In 1975, Sneed decided to return to school and obtain her M.B.A. degree from Harvard Business School.

After completing her M.B.A. degree in 1977, Sneed embarked on a long and successful career in corporate marketing. Sneed first joined General Foods (which later merged with Kraft Foods, Inc.) in 1977 as assistant product manager. She then went on to hold a number of high-ranking positions within Kraft Foods, Inc., ranging from Senior Vice President of Kraft's North American Food Service Division to Executive Vice President of the Desserts Division. In her role as Senior Vice President of Global Marketing Resources & Initiatives, Sneed was instrumental in guiding Kraft's efforts in the areas of consumer relationship marketing, digital marketing, consumer insights, media services, packaging, multi-cultural marketing and advertising. In addition, Sneed was part of a companywide initiative to thwart childhood obesity. In 2006, Sneed retired as Kraft's Executive Vice President of Global Marketing Resources and Initiatives when Kraft Foods, Inc., merged its global marketing unit with its global category development.

Sneed sits on the Board of Directors of The Charles Schwab Corporation, Airgas Inc., and Tyco Electronics

Limited. Sneed is a trustee of Teach for America, the Chicago Children's Museum, and Simmons College. She is also a member of the Executive Leadership Council and The Chicago Network.

Sneed married Lawrence P. Bass on September 2, 1978. They have one child, Courtney J. Bass.

Sneed was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 19, 2008.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paula Ann Sneed was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 19, 2008, in Lake Forest, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate executive Paula Ann Sneed (1947 -) held a number of high-ranking positions within Kraft Foods, Inc., ranging from Senior Vice President of Kraft's North American Food Service Division to Executive Vice President of the Desserts Division. In 2006, she retired as Kraft's Executive Vice President of Global Marketing Resources and Initiatives.

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:

Sneed, Paula Ann, 1947-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Sneed, Paula Ann, 1947- --Interviews

African American women executives--Interviews

Marketing executives--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Kraft, inc.

Occupations:

Corporate Executive

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 Paula Ann Sneed, February 19, 2008. 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 Paula Ann Sneed, Section A2008_020_001_001, TRT: 0:30:42 ?

Paula Ann Sneed was born on November 10, 1947 in Everett, Massachusetts to Furman Turner Sneed and Thomas Sneed. Her maternal grandmother was born in Olin, North Carolina, and moved to Everett, where she raised seven children, including Sneed's mother. After Sneed's maternal grandmother fell ill, Sneed's mother helped care for her younger siblings. Sneed's paternal grandfather was a Pentecostal minister and carpenter in Goldsboro, North Carolina; and, after the birth of Sneed's father, moved with his family to Malden, Massachusetts.

Sneed's parents met as teenagers, and dated during high school. After graduating, Sneed's mother sought work in an office, but was rejected because of her race. She worked for a time at a photography studio, and quit because of the segregated lunchrooms. During World War II, she was hired at a munitions factory. Sneed's father was drafted into the U.S. military, and performed throughout Europe with an all-black choir.

African American women executives--Interviews.

Marketing executives--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Ann Sneed, Section A2008_020_001_002, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Paula Ann Sneed grew up in Malden, Massachusetts. Her father was among the first African American bus drivers at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, and her mother worked at Malden City Hall, which was uncommon for women at the time. Sneed began her education at the Hilltop Nursery School, where she first experienced racial discrimination, and was defended by her mother. Sneed went on to attend the Charles A. Daniels School. She joined a Girl Scout troop and the Young Men's Christian Association, and studied piano. After graduating to Lincoln Junior High School, Sneed joined the writing committee at the Emmanuel Baptist Church. Her parents were active in the congregation, and the pastor, Earl Wesley Lawson, was a local civil rights leader. Sneed was influenced by the movement and her mother's encouragement, and became the first African American girl to serve as a class president at Malden High School.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Ann Sneed, Section A2008_020_001_003, TRT: 0:31:08 ?

Paula Ann Sneed matriculated in 1965 at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. While many women's colleges focused on the liberal arts, Simmons College emphasized preparation for professional careers. Sneed enrolled in the school of social work, and became involved with the Simmons Civil Rights Club. After attending a lecture by SNCC activist Stokely Carmichael at Harvard University, Sneed helped form the Simmons Black Student Organization, which held weekly guest lectures. Following her sophomore year, she joined activist Melvin King as a community organizer in Boston's African American neighborhoods. Sneed was influenced by the assassinations of Malcolm X, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy; and, after being elected president of the Simmons Black Student Organization, spearheaded the occupation of the college president's office in 1968. After graduating in 1969, Sneed was hired by Reverend Earl Wesley Lawson to serve as a counselor for alcoholic women.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Ann Sneed, Section A2008_020_001_004, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Paula Ann Sneed worked as the women's program coordinator at an alcoholic outreach center established by Reverend Earl Wesley Lawson. She was promoted after two and a half years, and later became the grant writer for the program's parent agency. In 1972, Sneed was hired at the Boston Sickle Cell Center as the research program's community services director. In this role, she worked with community health centers to obtain data for Dr. Louis Sullivan and Jane Desforges. Aspiring to obtain a high level government position, Sneed decided to pursue a master's degree in business. She matriculated in 1977 at the Harvard Business School, where she was one of twenty-five African American students. During the summers, she interned at the General Foods Corporation to learn about brand management. After earning her degree, she accepted the General Foods Corporation's offer of a full time position, and began working on a branding campaign for Stove Top stuffing.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Ann Sneed, Section A2008_020_001_005, TRT: 0:28:58 ?

Paula Ann Sneed managed brands like Jell-O and Shake 'N Bake during her early career at the General Foods Corporation, where her competitors included Post Consumer Brands and Nescafe. She learned about a range of industries, and aspired to become a vice president of the company. At this point in the interview, Sneed describes her principles for career success, which included goal setting, strategic planning and finding mentors. In 1986, she was offered a position as the company's vice president of consumer affairs. Sneed was reluctant to accept the position, which was traditionally considered a woman's role, until obtaining her supervisors' promise that she would eventually become the head of a division. Shortly afterwards, the General Foods Corporation was acquired by Philip Morris Inc., and many of Sneed's supervisors left the company. Despite this setback, Sneed went on to become the director of the food service division in 1990. She was the the first woman in such a role at the General Foods Corporation.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Ann Sneed, Section A2008_020_001_006, TRT: 0:28:33 ?

Paula Ann Sneed directed the food service division at the General Foods Corporation, which was owned by Philip Morris Inc. She later ran the company's desserts and meals divisions. After the General Foods Corporation merged with the Kraft Foods Group, Inc., Sneed was asked to consolidate the marketing divisions of the General Foods Corporation, Kraft Foods Group, Inc. and the Oscar Mayer Company, all of which were own by Philip Morris Inc. She reluctantly accepted, and began commuting from her home in New York City to Chicago, Illinois. Sneed went on to serve as the chief marketing officer, the founding director of the e-commerce division and the global head of marketing resources at Philip Morris Inc. In addition, she joined the board of Hercules, Inc. in 1994, and later became a member of the boards of Airgas, Inc., the Charles Schwab Corporation and Tyco Electronics. Sneed reflects upon her life, and her experiences of racial and gender discrimination in the workplace. She also narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Ann Sneed, Section A2008_020_001_007, TRT: 0:31:08 ?

Paula Ann Sneed met her husband on a flight to Chicago, Illinois, and encountered him again later that year in Boston, Massachusetts. Despite her plans to return to New York City, the couple began dating long distance, and married in 1978. They supported one another's careers, and raised a daughter, Courtney Bass, who graduated from Harvard University; participated in the Teach for America program; and, at the time of the interview, lived in Beijing, China. Sneed collected African and African American art, which she displayed

at her home and office. She describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community, and reflects upon her legacy and how she would like to be remembered. Sneed concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.