

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Eva Evans

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Evans, Eva, 1935-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Eva Evans,
Dates:	February 28, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:24:10).
Abstract:	Association chief executive and school superintendent Eva Evans (1935 - 2020) was the 24th international president of the AKA Sorority. She was also a retired education administrator who was the Lansing Public Schools Deputy Superintendent for Instruction in Lansing, Michigan. Evans was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 28, 2008, in Lansing, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_036
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

The 24th International President of Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority, Inc. (1994 – 1998) and educational administrator, Eva Lois Evans was born in Memphis, Tennessee but lived most of her life in Detroit, Michigan. Under Evans' leadership, the theme of Alpha Kappa Alpha became "Building the Future: The Alpha Kappa Alpha Strategy: Making the Net Work."

Reared in Detroit, Michigan, Evans attended the city's public elementary and high schools and went on to earn her B.S. degree from Wayne State University. She later attended Michigan State University where she received her M.A. degree and her Ph.D. While at Wayne State, Evans was initiated into the Xi Chapter of the AKA Sorority. For a period, she was affiliated with the Detroit Chapters and transferred her membership to the Delta Tau Omega Chapter after returning to Lansing.

With her career in education, Evans served as a classroom teacher, building administrator, Division Director, Assistant Superintendent and then the number two position of Deputy Superintendent of Lansing Public Schools when she retired. Evans has served the AKA Sorority in a variety of key roles. At the local level, she served as graduate advisor, auditor and chapter Basileus. In addition, she served as Regional Director of the Great Lakes Region and at the national level, she was the National Program Chairman. She was also a frequent workshop presenter at Boulés and the Leadership Fellows Program. Evans worked with the Sorority's 20th International President, Dr. Barbara K. Phillips, and helped to shape the national foci of her administration.

Evans was elected First-Vice President in 1990 in Richmond, Virginia. She was installed as the 24th International President in 1994 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The theme of Evans' administration was "Building the Future: The Alpha Kappa Alpha Strategy: Making the Net Work." She networked with major entities in the United States to make this a reality including, Elizabeth Dole of the American Red Cross and the Pillsbury Corporation for a

partnership in mathematics and science (PIMS) which became her administration's signature program. She also began the Public Policy Forums in Washington, D.C. At the 1996 Boulé, the Sorority made a \$50,000 contribution to the NAACP, a \$75,000 contribution to UNCF, and in 1998, the Sorority made additional contributions to the NAACP and UNCF of \$50,000 and \$25,000 respectively.

In her home community of Lansing, Michigan, Evans has served as many "firsts." The first female Deputy Superintendent of Lansing Schools; Campaign Chairman and Chairman of the Tri-County United Way; Vice Chairman of the Lansing Board of Water and Light; Chairman of the Lansing Community College Foundation; Sparrow Hospital Women's Board of Managers and Trustee of the Michigan State University Board of the College of Education. Evans was appointed by the state governor to serve on the Michigan Council for the Humanities and was Chairman of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

Evans has received countless honors in her hometown including the YWCA's Diana Award for Excellence in Education; the NAACP's Educator of the Year; Lansing Chamber of Commerce's Althena Award; Crystal Apple Award for Education from Michigan State University and the Applause Award from the Lansing Center for the Arts. She also has served as the Grand Marshall of the African American Parade and Family Picnic in Lansing which began in 1999. In 2006, Evans was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.

Evans was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 28, 2008 as part of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Centennial Boulé 2008 celebration. Segments of these interviews were used in a DVD entitled *A.K.A. Sorority: A Legacy of Supreme Service*.

Evans passed away on July 21, 2020.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Eva Evans was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 28, 2008, in Lansing, Michigan, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Association chief executive and school superintendent Eva Evans (1935 - 2020) was the 24th international president of the AKA Sorority. She was also a retired education administrator who was the Lansing Public Schools Deputy Superintendent for Instruction in Lansing, Michigan.

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:

Evans, Eva, 1935-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Evans, Eva, 1935- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Association Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Eva Evans, February 28, 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 Eva Evans, Section A2008_036_001_001, TRT: 0:28:10 ?

Eva Evans was born on January 14, 1935 in Memphis, Tennessee, but has spent most of her life in Detroit, Michigan. In 1994 she was elected the Supreme Basileus (national president) of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority after being encouraged to run for the position by her friend Barbara Phillips and HistoryMaker Bernice Irene Sumlin. Evans gave a groundbreaking campaign speech that incorporated Anita Baker's "Giving You the Best That I Got" with a video montage. Her vision for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated included recruiting college-educated sorors to tutor those in the African American community who needed training and job skills and creating a business roundtable. During her four-year tenure, Evans drew on her experience in education to implement math and science camps at Michigan State University in East Lansing, and worked with the American Red Cross on HIV/AIDS prevention programs. She hopes someday to realize her dream of developing a senior citizen residences in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Eva Evans, Section A2008_036_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Eva Evans' mother, Exzelma Lowe, was born around 1912 in Sardis, Mississippi. She graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis, Tennessee where she participated in parades and sang "I Only Have Eyes for You" at a school assembly. She also attended Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee. Evans' great-grandfather, Albert Lowe, was a farmer in Mississippi. One of his brothers baked an award-winning cake while employed at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis. The family started a local school for African Americans where Evans' Great-Aunt Cora taught. Evans' grandmother graduated from Walden University in Nashville, Tennessee. Evans' father, Arthur Allmon, was born around 1910 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. In this part of the interview, Evans also reflects upon her legacy as national president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the organization's history and future.

Video Oral History Interview with Eva Evans, Section A2008_036_001_003, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Eva Evans' father's family were farmers that owned land in Arkansas. Her parents met at a party in Memphis, Tennessee then married and moved to Detroit, Michigan around 1937 to be close to family already settled there. Evans' father was employed at the post office and worked on home improvement projects, including paneling the basement so Evans could roller skate in it. Evans was an only child and had a close relationship with her mother. At four years old, she tried to walk to her aunt's house and was scolded for it. She loved radio shows and movies while growing up and also enjoyed listening to records in the

listening booth at the local music store. Evans took dance lessons from the age six and her class performed at Detroit's 150th birthday celebration. She attended Dwyer Elementary School, then Harry B. Hutchins Intermediate School. After one year at Cass Technical High School, she transferred to Northern High School.

Video Oral History Interview with Eva Evans, Section A2008_036_001_004, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Eva Evans enjoyed studying English and writing for the school newspaper at Northern High School in Detroit, Michigan. Her mentors included Mr. Owen, her journalism and English teacher. Many of her peers later became famous, including HistoryMakers Berry Gordy and Verna Holley. After graduating in 1957 with a scholarship, Evans matriculated at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti where she joined Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She transferred to Wayne State University in Detroit because the public school system there tended to hire Wayne graduates as teachers. After graduating college in 1961 and completing her student teaching, Evans was hired at Joyce Elementary School. During the 1960s, Evans joined the young adult division of Detroit's NAACP, headed by HistoryMaker Ofield Dukes at the time and also participated in civil rights marches and heard Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at the Henry & Edsel Ford Memorial Auditorium. Evans married husband in 1964 and moved to Lansing, Michigan in 1966.

Video Oral History Interview with Eva Evans, Section A2008_036_001_005, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Eva Evans joined the Lansing, Michigan branch of the NAACP when she moved there in 1966. At the time, Lansing was undergoing desegregation in its public schools and Evans served as the NAACP director of education when the organization brought a lawsuit against Lansing schools. Although there were some protests against busing in Lansing, the desegregation process was helped by the expertise of school superintendent Dr. Carl Candoli and Dr. Matthew Prophet, Jr. In 1976, Evans earned her Ph.D. from Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. Her dissertation research focused on the impact of teacher expectations on students and how those were affected by race. She found that teachers' expectations were often lower for African American children. Evans also reflects on the impact of desegregation on public education in urban settings and the advent of charter schools, both of which changed the way public schools were funded.

Video Oral History Interview with Eva Evans, Section A2008_036_001_006, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Eva Evans taught a young Magic Johnson while working in the Lansing, Michigan school system. After earning her Ph.D., Evans became deputy superintendent for support services, then deputy superintendent of instruction for the Lansing schools. As deputy superintendent of instruction, she handled a suspension case when two high school students accessed the Internet in the school library to do stock trading. Evans became the first vice president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. in 1990, then president in 1994. A reception was held in her honor in Indianapolis, Indiana. Throughout her presidency, she developed programs to support math and science education. She created a public policy forum in Washington, D.C. that involved the Congressional Black Caucus. Evans also worked with Elizabeth Dole and HistoryMaker John H. Johnson and Linda Johnson-Rice of Johnson Publishing. Evans also talks about the work of Alex Kotlowitz and the 1996 Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority convention in Baltimore, Maryland.

Video Oral History Interview with Eva Evans, Section A2008_036_001_007, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Eva Evans initiated a voter registration program called Take Five during her presidency of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. While she was ultimately

unsuccessful in retaining Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's contract with Cleveland Job Corps in Cleveland Ohio, Evans was able to use her background in educational administration to avert a financial crisis that threatened the organization when the contract ended. One plan that had not come to fruition at the time of the interview was the establishment of an Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority retirement community in North Carolina. Evans maintained high hopes for the facility, though, and looked forward to its completion. Evans reflects upon her more mature perspective regarding rivalries between African American sororities and fraternities. She also reflects upon her achievements, life and legacy. She describes her hopes for the African American community, her own social community and how she wants to be remembered. She concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.