

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sylvia Ewing

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Ewing, Sylvia (Sylvia M.)
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Ewing,
Dates:	January 19, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:21:07).
Abstract:	Television personality and radio producer Sylvia Ewing (1957 -) An award-winning journalist, non-profit executive and teacher, Sylvia Ewing (1957 -) has been a producer for Chicago Public Media and host of WTTW pledge drives. Ewing was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 19, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_013
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Non-profit education executive, television personality and radio producer Sylvia Michelle Ewing was born in Erie, Pennsylvania on March 21, 1957 to Linwood Anthony Dennard a gospel music producer, and Louise Miller, a homemaker. She was raised by Louise Miller and her step father Milton Miller. She graduated from Technical Memorial Vocational High School in 1975.

Ewing came to Chicago, Illinois in 1977 and co-founded *City Life*, a free magazine for African Americans. During the 80s, she was active in the Anti-apartheid movement in Chicago and worked for the Mozambique Support Network. In 1991, she became host of the "On-Target" radio series on Chicago's WVON-AM. Since 1994, Ewing has worked as an on-air host for Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Chicago affiliate WTTW's pledge drive segments, and has done voice-overs for the station's programs and special projects. In 1999, she became a producer for WTTW's television program *Chicago Tonight* and served as producer for the Chicago Public Radio's WBEZ program *Eight Forty-Eight* from 2004 to 2006 and director of cultural relations of Steppenwolf Theater Company's *Traffic Series* for the 2007 - 2008 season. In 2008, she served as the Deputy Director and in 2010, became the Director of External Affairs for the Illinois Network of Charter Schools. Ewing also teaches media literacy and journalism classes as an adjunct professor at Columbia College Chicago and has written for *Chicago Parent Magazine*, the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *N'DIGO Magazine*.

Ewing has received the Award of Excellence from the Chicago Association of Black Journalists, the Peter Lisagor Award, the Edward R. Murrow Award, the Public News Directors, Inc. Award and has been nominated for three local Emmys. She has served on the board of directors for several organizations including the Association of Women Journalists, the Illinois College Access Network, and the Chicago Committee for Urban Opportunity and the Community Justice for Youth Institute. Ewing was the president of the Young Chicago Authors Board of Directors home of the Louder than a Bomb youth poetry festival and the co-creator of the concept for the Right to Succeed education organization. She is a certified meditation teacher and has practiced yoga since she was

nineteen. Ewing lives in Chicago, Illinois and has two adult children Eve and Matthew.

Sylvia Ewing was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 19, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Sylvia Ewing was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 19, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Television personality and radio producer Sylvia Ewing (1957 -) An award-winning journalist, non-profit executive and teacher, Sylvia Ewing (1957 -) has been a producer for Chicago Public Media and host of WTTW pledge drives.

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:

Ewing, Sylvia (Sylvia M.)

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Ewing, Sylvia (Sylvia M.)--Interviews

Women radio producers and directors--Interviews.

African American television personalities--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Television Personality

Radio Producer

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Sylvia Ewing, January 19, 2012. 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 Sylvia Ewing, Section A2012_013_001_001, TRT: 1:29:55 ?

Sylvia Ewing describes her family's history. Her mother, Louise Miller, was born in January of 1938 in Houston, Mississippi, and then moved with her family to Erie, Pennsylvania at the age of nine, where they settled. Ewing was raised by her mother, grandmother, Rosa Anne Thomas, and her stepfather, Milton Miller. She talks about meeting her biological father, Lynwood Anthony Dennard, for the first time when she was nineteen years old, her relationship with him, his career as an entrepreneur and a record producer, and his family in California. Ewing recalls her mother and stepfather's courtship, and her stepfather's dedication towards their family. She also reflects upon the influence that her parents and her stepfather have had in her life. Ewing discusses the neighborhood where she grew up in Erie, her siblings, and her earliest childhood memories.

African American families.

African American mothers.

African American fathers.

African American grandparents.

Stepfathers.

Childhood and youth.

African American neighborhoods--Pennsylvania--Erie.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Ewing, Section A2012_013_001_002, TRT: 2:29:10 ?

Sylvia Ewing was born and raised in Erie, Pennsylvania. She describes the city, her memories of growing up there, and her experience in elementary and middle school. Ewing attended Technical Memorial Vocational High School, where she became interested in art, dance, production and marketing, and commercial art. She talks about her classes, extracurricular activities in high school, and graduating in 1975. Ewing also discusses her relationship with her younger sisters, Nicole and Colette.

Childhood and youth--Pennsylvania--Erie.

African Americans--Education, Elementary--Pennsylvania--Erie.

Education, Secondary--Activities--Pennsylvania--Erie.

Brothers and sisters--Pennsylvania--Erie.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Ewing, Section A2012_013_001_003, TRT: 3:29:57 ?

Sylvia Ewing graduated from Technical Memorial Vocational High School in Erie, Pennsylvania, in 1979, where she studied commercial art. She then spent a year in Florida before returning to Erie. In 1977, Ewing moved to Chicago, Illinois, to study dance. She also worked as a receptionist at the management consulting firm, Amerherst Associates. Ewing co-founded a free periodical called 'City Life' in the late 1970s, and then founded Chicago Fashion Associates to mentor youth. She describes her experience with 'City Life' and Chicago Fashion Associates, as well as her involvement in the anti-Apartheid movement and the Mozambique Support Network. Ewing also describes her interest in television and the news, Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, learning about Malcolm X, and her views on religion and spirituality.

African American periodicals.

African Americans--Mentoring.

Anti-apartheid activists.

Mozambique Support Network.

African Americans--Religion.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Ewing, Section A2012_013_001_004, TRT: 4:29:54 ?

Sylvia Ewing was hired to work at WVON Radio, an African American station in Chicago, Illinois, in 1991. In 1994, she joined WTTW, Channel 11 as an on-air pledge talent, and went on to host and produce her own shows. Ewing describes her experience at WVON and at WTTW. She further describes her involvement in the Mozambique Support Network, and her experience organizing a conference on Namibia in Chicago in the 1980s. Ewing talks about her former husband, his career, their two children and working freelance. She also recalls Oprah Winfrey's early days in Chicago.

African American radio stations--Illinois--Chicago.

WTTW (Television station : Chicago, Ill.).

Mozambique Support Network.

African American families.

Winfrey, Oprah.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Ewing, Section A2012_013_001_005, TRT: 5:30:36 ?

Sylvia Ewing describes her employment at WTTW Channel 11 where she has worked in various roles including on-air host, producer, and viewer marketing. She describes her experience on the show 'Chicago Tonight', which featured Barack Obama in 2000. In 2004, she became a producer for the show 'Eight Forty-Eight' on WBEZ, Chicago Public Radio. Ewing talks about her transition from mainstream media to education, when she joined the Illinois Network of Charter Schools. In 2007, she began working for 'Traffic' at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and returned to INCS in 2008. Ewing describes her experience at Steppenwolf Theatre. She also talks about her work in broadcast media that led to the Peter Lisagor Award for Broadcast Journalism and the Edward R. Murrow Award.

WTTW (Television station : Chicago, Ill.).

Eight forty-eight (Radio program).

WBEZ (Radio station : Chicago, Ill.).

Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

Broadcast journalism.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Ewing, Section A2012_013_001_006, TRT: 6:29:05 ?

Sylvia Ewing worked to bring talent to the Steppenwolf Theatre Company from 2007 to 2008. In 2008, she returned to the Illinois Network of Charter Schools, where she became the director of communications and the director of external affairs. Ewing discusses the importance of cultural theatre in the black community and the importance of charter schools. She also talks about her mentor, journalist John Callaway, and what she would have done differently in her career. Ewing reflects upon her legacy, and the role of meditation in her life. Charter schools--Illinois--Chicago.

Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

Callaway, John D.

Mentoring.

Video Oral History Interview with Sylvia Ewing, Section A2012_013_001_007, TRT: 7:22:30 ?

Sylvia Ewing talks about her family and her interest in teaching. She also

provides advice to aspiring journalists and talks about how she would like to be remembered. Ewing ends her interview by describing her photographs.

African American families.

Mentoring.

Photographs.