

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Pamela Newkirk

PERSON

Newkirk, Pamela

**Alternative Names:** Pamela Newkirk;

**Life Dates:** November 13, 1957-

**Place of Birth:** New York, New York, USA

**Residence:** New York, New York

**Work:** New York, New York

**Occupations:** Journalism Professor; Author

## Biographical Note

Journalist, professor and author Pamela Newkirk was born in New York City to Louis and Gloria Newkirk. Growing up, her father collected African American memorabilia which inspired her enduring interest in black history and culture. Newkirk attended New York University where she received her B.A. degree in journalism. She later earned her master's degree in journalism and her Ph.D. degree in comparative and international education from Columbia University.

In 1984, after writing for numerous African American newspapers, Newkirk began her first position as a daily reporter for the Knickerbocker News in Albany, New York. There, she worked her way up from a suburban beat reporter to the New York State Legislature. In 1987, she was hired as a Capitol Hill correspondent for Gannett News Service in Washington, D.C. Among her assignments was covering the 1988 Democratic National Convention. In 1990, Newkirk was one of the reporters who traveled to South Africa with Reverend Jesse Jackson where she witnessed Nelson Mandela's release from prison. Her articles from South Africa for The New York Post earned her the International Reporting Award from the New York Association of Black Journalists. In 1992, her New York Newsday reporting team was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for Spot News. A year later, Newkirk joined the journalism faculty at New York University where she later became director of undergraduate studies.

In 2000, Newkirk published her first book, Within the Veil: Black Journalists, White Media, which won the National Press Club Award for Media Criticism. The book was adopted in journalism schools across the country and Newkirk lectured widely on racial portrayals and media diversity. Her articles on race and African American culture have

been published in numerous publications including The New York Times, The Nation, Artnews, The Media Studies Journal, and The Washington Post.

In 2004, her second book, *A Love No Less: Two Centuries of African American Love Letters*, was published by Doubleday. Newkirk's 2009 book, *Letters from Black America*, a collection of more than two hundred letters written by African Americans over the course of three centuries, was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Her fourth book, *Spectacle: The Astonishing Life of Ota Benga*, was published by Harper Collins in 2015.

Newkirk is married to Michael Nairne and they have two daughters, Marjani and Mykel.

Pamela Newkirk was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 3, 2012.

## Related Entries

**Columbia University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Ph.D**

**Columbia University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**MS**

**New York University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**Knickerbocker News** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1971 to ?]

**State Capitol Correspondent**

**Gannett News Service** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1973 to ?]

**Capitol Hill Correspondent**

**USA Today** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1987 to 1989]

**Capitol Hill Correspondent**

**New York Post** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1989 to 1990]

**Special Correspondent**

**New York Newsday** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1991 to 1993]

**Reporter**

**New York University** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1994 to 1996]

**Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication**

**New York University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2000 to 2009]

**Associate Professor of Journalism**

**New York University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2001 to 2009]

**Faculty Advisor, Presidential Scholars Program**

**New York University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2005 to 2005]

**Covener, Faculty Resource Network**

**New York University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2006 to 2006]

**Director**

**New York University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2008 to 2010]

**Faculty Associate, Faculty In and Of the City Program**

**Nation, The** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 199805 to 2000]

**Columnist**

**New York University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 199309 to 2000]

**Assistant Professor of Journalism**

**New York University Urban Journalism Workshop** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 2002 to 2007]

**Director**

**New York University** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 2002 to 2007]

**Press Advisory Board**

**Annenberg Foundation Commission on the Press** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 2004 to 2005]

**Advisory Board Member**

**Nation Institute** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 2005 to ?]

**Fellow**

