

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Marian Johnson-Thompson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Johnson-Thompson, Marian, 1946-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson,
Dates:	May 7, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:30:13).
Abstract:	Molecular virologist Marian Johnson-Thompson (1946 -) , Director of Education and Biomedical Research Development for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, is Professor Emerita of Biology and Environmental Sciences at the University of the District of Columbia. Johnson-Thompson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 7, 2013, in Durham, North Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_112
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Molecular virologist, research director, and professor Marian Cecelia Johnson-Thompson was born in Boston, Massachusetts on December 9, 1946. She grew up in Rivera Beach, Florida. After graduating from high school in 1956, Johnson-Thompson enrolled at Howard University and graduated from there with her B.S. degree in microbiology in 1969 and her M.S. degree in microbiology in 1971. She went on to earn her Ph.D. in molecular virology from Georgetown University Medical School in 1978.

Upon graduation, Johnson-Thompson was hired by the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) where she became a Professor of Biology in 1995. She also served as an adjunct professor of Pharmacology at Georgetown University, and as an adjunct professor in the Department of Botany at Howard University. In addition, Johnson-Thompson held appointments as a visiting scientist at the Lawrence Livermore Radiation Laboratory, and as a molecular virologist at the National Cancer Institute. In 1992, Johnson-Thompson was appointed as the Director of Education and Biomedical Research Development for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). While there, she developed K-12 STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education programs as well as minority training programs. Her major initiatives include the Bridging Education, Science and Technology (BEST) Program, Advanced Research Cooperation in Environmental Health (ARCH) program. Her publications include over forty-five articles, book chapters and abstracts that focus on training, mentoring, and developing public policy to advance underrepresented groups in STEM fields. In 2004, Johnson-Thompson was named Professor Emerita of Biology and Environmental Sciences at UDC and she began serving as an adjunct professor in the School of Public Health at the University of NC-Chapel Hill.

Johnson-Thompson served as chair of the NIEHS Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects. At the national level, she served as a member of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Human Subjects Research Advisory Committee and the Trans-NIH Human Microbiome Working Group. Johnson-Thomson is a life member

of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the International Congress of Black Women. In 1978, she was a founding member of the National Network of Minority Women in Science.

Her awards and honors include the Alice C. Evans Award from the American Society for Microbiology in 2004 for her contributions to the advancement and full participation of women in microbiology. Johnson-Thompson was elected as a Fellow in the American Academy of Microbiology in 1998 and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in 2001.

Marian Johnson-Thompson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 7, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 7, 2013, in Durham, North Carolina, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Molecular virologist Marian Johnson-Thompson (1946 -), Director of Education and Biomedical Research Development for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, is Professor Emerita of Biology and Environmental Sciences at the University of the District of Columbia.

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:

Johnson-Thompson, Marian, 1946-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Johnson-Thompson, Marian, 1946- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Molecular Virologist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 Marian Johnson-Thompson, May 7, 2013. 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 Marian Johnson-Thompson, Section A2013_112_001_001,
TRT: 1:28:31 ?

Marian Johnson-Thompson describes her family's background. Johnson-Thompson's mother, Rose Mae Henderson Beavers, was born in 1919, in Galveston, Texas. Her grandfather was a carpenter who built pianos, and owned land in Abbeville, Louisiana. After his untimely death, Johnson-Thompson's grandmother, Eula Chagois Henderson, began to work at the John Sealy Hospital in Galveston, where she became a phlebotomist. Rose Henderson attended Holy Rosary Catholic Church as well as Catholic school. Johnson-Thompson's father, Edwin Saint Aloyious Johnson, was born in 1908 in Kingston, Jamaica to a Haitian mother and a Cuban father. He immigrated to the United States in the 1930s or the 1940s, and attended Columbia University for his master's degree. He then worked at the USO in Galveston, where he met Johnson-Thompson's mother. Edwin Thomson later pursued medical school at Boston City College, interned with Dr. Bill Gray in Wilmington, North Carolina, and then began to practice in Clewiston, Florida.

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Video Oral History Interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson, Section A2013_112_001_002,
TRT: 2:28:09 ?

Marian Johnson-Thompson was raised in Boston, Massachusetts and Clewiston, Florida, where her father owned his physician's practice. Johnson-Thomson describes her memories of growing up in Boston, Clewiston and Miami, Florida. She talks about her parents' personalities, how they met, and about being aware of their complicated relationship. Johnson-Thompson began grade school in Boston and soon after moved to Clewiston, where she and her brother lived with their father, before moving to Miami, Florida to continue their schooling under their mother's supervision. She describes her experience in school in Miami.

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Video Oral History Interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson, Section A2013_112_001_003,
TRT: 3:29:55 ?

Marian Johnson-Thompson attended grade school in Clewiston, Florida, where she lived with her father, who ran his physician's practice there. She began high school in Riviera Beach, Florida, where she lived with her stepmother. After her father's death in 1961, Johnson-Thompson continued to live with her stepmother, until she finished high school at John F. Kennedy High School. She describes her experience in school, and her stepmother's denial of any inheritance of her father's money. In 1965, Johnson-Thompson began to attend Howard University, with financial support and encouragement from her godparents, the Schaeffers. She describes her rich experience at Howard, where she was influenced by her advisor, botanist, Marie Clark Taylor, and biologist,

John Rear.

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Video Oral History Interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson, Section A2013_112_001_004,
TRT: 4:28:15 ?

In 1965, Marian Johnson-Thompson enrolled at Howard University, where she earned a B.S. degree in microbiology in 1969. Johnson-Thompson pledged Delta Sigma Theta sorority at Howard University. Johnson-Thompson talks about HistoryMakers Georgia Dunston, Agnes Day and LaSalle Leffall. She also talks about anthropologist, Montague Cobb, the rise of Black Power in the United States, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, and political activism in the 1960s. Johnson-Thompson remained at Howard to pursue her M.S. degree in microbiology. She discusses her thesis research on 'The Ultrastructure of Neurospora Crassa Mycelia', which she completed under the mentorship of Professor Rhadey Dwivedi.

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Video Oral History Interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson, Section A2013_112_001_005,
TRT: 5:28:14 ?

In 1971, Marian Johnson-Thompson joined the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) as an instructor in the biology department. While there, she decided to pursue a doctorate degree in microbiology. Johnson-Thompson describes her frustrating experience while trying to apply for graduate school at the University of Maryland, and her decision to pursue her Ph.D. degree at Georgetown University. She describes her dissertation on the effect of the anti-leukemic agent, 5-azacytidine, on Simian Virus 40 DNA replication and protein synthesis. After earning her Ph.D. degree soon after she got married in 1978, Johnson-Thompson returned to UDC, where she became involved with teaching and administration. In this section of the interview, she also discusses the eradication of smallpox in 1979, her involvement with the National Network of Minority Women in Science, and teaching part-time at Howard University.

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Video Oral History Interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson, Section A2013_112_001_006,
TRT: 6:29:49 ?

In 1983, Marian Johnson-Thompson was promoted to become a full professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). She talks about her teaching responsibilities at UDC as well as her research collaboration at the National Cancer Institute (NCI). In this section of the interview, Johnson-Thompson describes the details of the AIDS

epidemic, its etiology, and common social myths that surrounded the spread of AIDS in the 1980s. In 1992, Johnson-Thompson was appointed as Director of Institutional Diversity at the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) of the NIH, in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. She describes her family’s decision to move to North Carolina, and her involvement in establishing the Advanced Research Collaboration for Environmental Health (ARCH) Program and the Environmental Justice Program.

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Video Oral History Interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson, Section A2013_112_001_007, TRT: 7:29:38 ?

In 1998, Marian Johnson-Thompson was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, and in 2004, she was elected as a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Johnson-Thompson talks about her notable awards and recognitions, including those that she has received from the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). In this section of the interview, Johnson-Thompson talks about research on the Epstein-Barr virus that was conducted in Uganda, Africa, and shares her perspectives on the story of Henrietta Lacks, the book by author Rebecca Skloot, as well as her own historical analysis of the controversy surrounding the will of the African American microbiologist, William Hinton, who left all his assets to his alma mater, Harvard University. Johnson-Thomson also reflects upon her career’s legacy and her choices.

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Video Oral History Interview with Marian Johnson-Thompson, Section A2013_112_001_008, TRT: 8:07:42 ?

In this closing section of the interview, Marian Johnson-Thompson talks about her family, reflects upon her involvement in mentoring students and professionals, and talks about how she would like to be remembered.
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