

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Marcia Dyson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dyson, Marcia L., 1951-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Marcia Dyson,
Dates:	March 21, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:58:08).
Abstract:	Civic leader and public relations chief executive Reverend Marcia Dyson (1951 -) worked on the political campaigns of Barack Obama, Harold Washington and Hillary Clinton, and founded the Women's Global Initiative. Dyson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 21, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_092
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Civic leader and public relations expert Marcia L. Dyson was born on October 29, 1951 in Chicago, Illinois. She graduated from Arthur J. Dixon Elementary School and Bowen High School in Chicago, Illinois. Dyson received her B.S. degree in business administration from the University of Illinois in 1983, and went on to complete the University of Chicago Executive Business program. In 1973, Dyson was hired as a teacher at the Holy Angels School in Chicago, Illinois. She then worked as an external auditor for James Fields CPA. From 1980 to 1982, Dyson served as the first chief of staff for Reverend Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s Operation Push International Trade Bureau. She then briefly served as *Black Family Magazine's* community relations director before establishing Marcia L. Dyson Public Relations in 1982. From 1983 to 1985, Dyson worked as an account executive for Aaron Cushman. She was then named senior manager for Margie Korshak Associates in 1985, and then worked as senior vice president of R. J. Dale Advertising and Public Relations from 1987 until 1990. In 1990, Dyson was hired as the public information officer for the Mayor's Office of Special Events for the City of Chicago, where she hosted foreign dignitaries and served as the liaison to the Illinois Tourism Board, McCormick Authority Convention Center Board, Illinois Film Office and Chicago's religious community. In 1992, Dyson co-founded and served as president and CEO of M and M Dyson, LLC, an international consulting firm. She also founded Women's Global Initiative, a for-profit organization that works to enhance the lives of women. In addition, Dyson became an ordained minister in 1999.

Dyson served as a presidential scholar at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina; was a social justice think tank executive board member for Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas; and served as an advisor to Howard University's international programs. She has also contributed to *Essence* magazine, *New Deal 2.0*, *The Grio*, *The Root* and *Huffington Post* online media, and has been a reoccurring political strategist on MSNBC's *Martin Bashir Show*.

Dyson was selected to serve on the Women's Global Summit Leadership board, and co-hosted the Africa's First

Ladies Summit in the Washington, D.C. area. She also helped create a Modern Narrative for Muslim Women. Dyson was named the first Chaplain for the Coalition of Hope, and has been an executive advisor and consultant to the Conference of Black Mayors. She was also a consultant to the Clinton Foundation on behalf of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission (IHRC). Dyson served as a board member of Nap Advance (We Advance), and has also been a member of many women's organizations, including the Black Women's Round Table, Face to Face, and the Middle East Peace Civic Forum.

She has received numerous awards, including a Unita Award from the National Conference of Black Mayors; the U.S. Coast Guard's Citizens Award; an Appreciation Award from the Institute for Diversity-Health; and a Humanitarian Award from the Global Institute.

Dyson is married to Michael Eric Dyson. They reside in Washington, D.C.

Marcia L. Dyson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 21, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Marcia Dyson was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 21, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Civic leader and public relations chief executive Reverend Marcia Dyson (1951 -) worked on the political campaigns of Barack Obama, Harold Washington and Hillary Clinton, and founded the Women's Global Initiative.

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:

Dyson, Marcia L., 1951-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dyson, Marcia L., 1951---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Civic Leader

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 Reverend Marcia Dyson, March 21, 2014. 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 Reverend Marcia Dyson, Section A2014_092_001_001, TRT: 1:28:07 ?

Reverend Marcia Dyson was born on October 29, 1951 in Chicago, Illinois to Rosa Fields Smith and Clarence Dukes. Her maternal ancestors were employed by a black freeman in Richmond, Virginia, until moving to Indianapolis, Indiana in 1893. Dyson's mother was born in Indianapolis in 1921, and later moved with her family to Brazil, Indiana. There, Dyson's maternal grandmother, Mary Gardner, ran a boarding house, while her grandfather worked as a bricklayer. Dyson's mother came to Chicago when she was a teenager, and worked for her aunt, who ran numbers. She also met Dyson's father, who was born in Birdsong, Arkansas in 1911. He came to Chicago to work on the Illinois Central Railroad, and became a railroad union leader and precinct captain under Mayor Richard J. Daley. Dyson's parents separated when she was young. She was raised by her stepfather, Matthew Smith, who was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1929. He attended the Tuskegee Institute, and practiced podiatry in Chicago's Chatham neighborhood.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Marcia Dyson, Section A2014_092_001_002, TRT: 2:29:03 ?

Reverend Marcia Dyson spent her early childhood in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois, where she attended Francis Parkman Elementary School. In 1963, her family moved to her stepfather's home in the middle class African American community of Chatham. She attended Arthur Dixon Elementary School through the eighth grade, and enrolled at Hirsch High School in 1965. Two years later, Dyson's family relocated to South Shore, where she earned her diploma at James H. Bowen High School. She studied computer programming, and excelled in math and science. Following the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dyson joined the Nation of Islam, but was asked to leave because of her interest in Malcolm X. She then became involved with the Black Peoples Topographical Research Centers, and helped purchase property for the collective in South Shore. She began a science degree at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle in 1969, but left school after the birth of her son, Mwata Dyson, in 1972.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Marcia Dyson, Section A2014_092_001_003, TRT: 3:29:47 ?

Reverend Marcia Dyson left the Black Peoples Topographical Research Center in 1975. She maintained relationships with the cooperative's members, and continued to live and work in the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois. In 1980, Dyson began teaching children from the Ida B. Wells Homes at the Holy Angels Catholic School, and partnered with Science Research Associates Inc. to create a remedial curriculum for her students. At the same time, she served as the chief of staff for the Operation PUSH International Trade Bureau. Frustrated with Reverend Jesse L. Jackson's leadership style, Dyson formed Marcia L. Dyson Public Relations in 1982, while also working for Black Family magazine and studying at Chicago State University. She served as a consultant for Harold Washington's first mayoral campaign in 1983, and then joined the public relations firm of Aaron D. Cushman and Associates. Dyson

moved to Margie Korshak and Associates in 1985.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Marcia Dyson, Section A2014_092_001_004, TRT: 4:26:55 ?

Reverend Marcia Dyson completed an executive business certificate at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business in 1987. Around that time, she joined R.J. Dale Advertising and Public Relations, where she worked on the Illinois Young Black Achievers program with the Illinois State Lottery, and created programming to engage black youth with the Chicago Marathon. In 1990, Dyson transitioned to the Mayor's Office of Special Events, where she worked to educate Mayor Richard M. Daley about the minority communities under his governance. Around this time, she met Michael Eric Dyson at the Chicago Theological Seminary. After marrying in 1992, they moved to Providence, Rhode Island, where Dyson's husband taught at Brown University. Dyson founded the public relations firm of M and M Dyson, LLC, and coordinated Barack Obama's early speaking engagements. After two years, the couple moved to North Carolina, where Dyson joined the executive committee of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Marcia Dyson, Section A2014_092_001_005, TRT: 5:30:50 ?

Reverend Marcia Dyson moved to New York City in 1997, and began writing for Essence magazine. She received national recognition for her article 'When Preachers Prey,' which examined sexual exploitation by black religious leaders. Dyson was ordained by Dr. Barbara L. King in 1999. In 2000, she organized a spiritual retreat for Essence staff to visit diasporic communities and Candomble leaders in Brazil. She then returned to Chicago, Illinois, where her writing was published in anthologies edited by Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Johnnetta B. Cole and Paula Giddings. Dyson became chaplain of the Coalition of Hope Foundation, a humanitarian organization of U.S. military veterans. She also served as an advocate for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Invited by Madeleine Albright, Dyson joined the Women's Global Summit Leadership Board in 2007, and founded the Women's Global Initiative one year later. She campaigned for Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2008, and worked with Haitian women's organizations after the earthquake of 2010.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Marcia Dyson, Section A2014_092_001_006, TRT: 6:27:13 ?

Reverend Marcia Dyson became involved with the National Conference of Black Mayors in the late 2000s, after witnessing the congressional backlash against President Barack Obama's administration. In 2012, she hosted a summit to foster connections between African American women and the African First Ladies Initiative. In 2013, Dyson became a board member and international spokesperson for the Middle East Peace Working Group. She worked to improve U.S. policy towards Palestine and Israel, and visited Syrian refugees at the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. At the time of the interview, Dyson was organizing an event for women entrepreneurs at the United Nations, and planned to attend the World Leaders Forum Dubai. She was also preparing for Hillary Rodham Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign with the Ready Political Action Committee. At this point, Dyson describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community, and reflects upon her life, legacy and how she would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Marcia Dyson, Section A2014_092_001_007, TRT: 7:06:13 ?

Reverend Marcia Dyson narrates her photographs.

