

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Tonya Lewis Lee

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Lee, Tonya Lewis
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 6, 2014
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2014
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:56:27).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Producer, author, and lawyer Tonya Lewis Lee (1966 - ) was the founder of Madstone Company, Inc. and co-founder of ToniK Productions. She co-authored the 2004 novel <i>Gotham Diaries</i> , and has authored three books with her husband, Spike Lee: <i>Please, Baby, Please</i> ; <i>Please, Puppy, Please</i> ; and <i>Giant Steps to Change the World</i> . Lee was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 6, 2014, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2014_104
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Producer, author and lawyer Tonya Lewis Lee was born on March 30, 1966 to Lillian Glenn Lewis and George Lewis, a corporate executive at Philip Morris. Lee received her B.A. degree from Sarah Lawrence College in 1988, and her J.D. degree from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1991.

Upon graduation, Lee worked at the law firm of Nixon, Hargrave, Devans & Doyle (now Nixon Peabody LLP) in Washington, D.C., where she primarily serviced Gannett Co., Inc. on corporate and First Amendment issues. In 1992, during the Congressional Black Caucus Weekend in Washington, D.C., Lee met her future husband, Spike Lee. A year later, they were married in New York City in a private ceremony.

In 1998, Lee founded the media production company, Madstone Company, Inc., where she worked with Disney Television Animation and Nickelodeon. Lee produced the 2004 documentary, *I Sit Where I Want: The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education*, which won the Beacon and Parents' Choice awards. In 2005, she executively produced the TV miniseries, *Miracle's Boys*. Then, in 2006, Lee worked with TV Land to produce the talk show, *That's What I'm Talking About*, which was hosted by Wayne Brady. The following year, Lee became the spokesperson for the Office of Minority Health's campaign, "A Healthy Baby Begins With You," which addressed the high infant mortality rate in the United States; and she then produced a documentary about the campaign, *Crisis in the Crib: Saving Our Nation's Babies*. In 2012, she co-founded the film and television production company, ToniK Productions, which produced Lee's co-written screenplay, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*.

Outspoken on the issues of women and race, Lee has had a speaking tour schedule and has appeared on national and local television and radio stations across the United States. She has written for magazines such as *Avenue*, *Gotham*, *O at Home* and *Glamour*. She has also been featured in *The New York Times*, *Avenue*, *Town and Country*, *New York Magazine*, *O*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, *NV Magazine*, *Redbook*, *Child* and *New York Family Magazine*. Lee is

co-author, with Crystal McCrary, of the 2004 novel *Gotham Diaries*, and has co-authored three books with Spike Lee: *Please, Baby, Please* (2002); *Please, Puppy, Please* (2004); and *Giant Steps to Change the World* (2011).

Lee resides in New York City with her husband and their two children, Satchel and Jackson.

Tonya Lewis Lee was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 6, 2014.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Tonya Lewis Lee was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on May 6, 2014, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Producer, author, and lawyer Tonya Lewis Lee (1966 - ) was the founder of Madstone Company, Inc. and co-founder of ToniK Productions. She co-authored the 2004 novel *Gotham Diaries*, and has authored three books with her husband, Spike Lee: *Please, Baby, Please*; *Please, Puppy, Please*; and *Giant Steps to Change the World*.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Lee, Tonya Lewis

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Lee, Tonya Lewis--Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Producer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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## 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 Tonya Lewis Lee, May 6, 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

- Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee, Section A2014\_104\_001\_001, TRT: 1:31:21?
- Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee, Section A2014\_104\_001\_002, TRT: 2:30:28?
- Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee, Section A2014\_104\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:18?
- Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee, Section A2014\_104\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:45?
- Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee, Section A2014\_104\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:56?
- Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee, Section A2014\_104\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:15?
- Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee, Section A2014\_104\_001\_007, TRT: 7:33:50?
- Video Oral History Interview with Tonya Lewis Lee, Section A2014\_104\_001\_008, TRT: 8:22:34?