

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Penelope Stewart

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Stewart, Penelope, 1955-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Penelope Stewart,
Dates:	February 23, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:00:00).
Abstract:	Nonprofit executive Penelope Stewart (1955 -) served as community outreach manager at Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee and developed the Strong Baby Sanctuary Program among others. Stewart was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 23, 2017, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_060
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Nonprofit executive Penelope Stewart was born on December 18, 1955 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Claude Edwards and Bernice Swan Edwards. She attended Keefe Avenue School and Parkman Junior High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Stewart graduated from Washington High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1973, and attended the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 2002, she earned her B.A. degree in business from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In 1981, Stewart left Mount Mary College to open the Ambiance hair salon and a jewelry design business in Milwaukee. She was also hired by the Milwaukee Urban League to design and make handbags for their mother and daughter events, and she taught children how to design wearable art in the Milwaukee Public Schools. In 1997, Stewart joined All Pro Broadcasting, Inc. as the general sales manager and senior account executive for several radio stations in Milwaukee including WMCS Radio, WZTI Radio, WKKV Radio and WJMR Radio. In 2004, Stewart was hired at the BloodCenter of Wisconsin as the community outreach manager and worked to educate the African American community about sickle cell disease as well as managed the bone marrow donation program. In 2013, Stewart went to work at Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where she raised awareness about disease prevention, health care and informational resources. In 2015, to address the rising infant mortality rate in Milwaukee, Stewart helped develop the Strong Baby Sanctuary Program, and partnered with local organizations to reduce infant mortality. She also created the Blanket of Love Program, which offered prenatal education for mothers and assistance for poor families. In 2018, Stewart helped launch the community wellness program, Be of Good Heart, to raise awareness about diabetes and hypertension and offer free health screenings.

In 2004, Stewart received the Jammin' Legends Award from WJMR Jammin' 98.3 FM Radio, in Milwaukee. She was also the recipient of the Jammin' 98.3 Radio Community Leader Award, the Health Care Heroes Award by the Milwaukee BizTimes, and was named the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Kappa Phi Chapter Milwaukee Citizen of the Year.

Stewart has one daughter, Tamara and one son, Jamie.

Penelope Stewart was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 23, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Penelope Stewart was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 23, 2017, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Nonprofit executive Penelope Stewart (1955 -) served as community outreach manager at Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee and developed the Strong Baby Sanctuary Program among others.

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:

Stewart, Penelope, 1955-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Stewart, Penelope, 1955- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Nonprofit Executive

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 Penelope Stewart, February 23, 2017. 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 Penelope Stewart, Section A2017_060_001_001, TRT: 1:29:31
?

Penelope Stewart was born on December 8, 1955 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Claude Edwards and Bernice Swan Edwards. Her maternal grandparents, Wash

Swan and Sallie Swan, had twelve children, and lived in a rural area near Yazoo City, Mississippi. Stewart's mother was one of the older children, and helped raise her younger siblings. She attended high school in Mississippi, and aspired to become a seamstress or teacher. Stewart's father was born in Belzoni, Mississippi, where his family owned a farm. He attended school until receiving orders to enlist in the U.S. Army during World War II. In accordance with the Church of God in Christ, he registered as a conscientious objector and served in a non-combat role in Germany. After returning to Mississippi, he met Stewart's mother at church. They married and moved to Milwaukee, where Stewart's mother opened a hair salon. Stewart describes her five siblings, and remembers the effects of white flight and urban renewal in Milwaukee.

Video Oral History Interview with Penelope Stewart, Section A2017_060_001_002, TRT: 2:20:57
?

Penelope Stewart grew up in a predominantly black, middle class neighborhood on the North Side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There, she attended the Keefe Avenue School until the third grade, when was bused to the integrated 35th Street School. Despite integration policies, the classrooms and lunch areas were segregated to prevent interactions between the black and white students. By 1966, most of the white students' families had moved to the suburbs of Milwaukee. Stewart attended Parkman Junior High School, which was built to serve the city's increasing African American population. She developed an interest in math, sang in the choir and participated in social clubs. Stewart decided to attend Washington High School instead of her neighborhood school, because she wanted to focus on her studies. She graduated early in 1973 after becoming pregnant with her first child. Stewart also talks about her religious faith and her parents' hair salon and barbershop in Milwaukee.

Video Oral History Interview with Penelope Stewart, Section A2017_060_001_003, TRT: 3:28:03
?

Penelope Stewart and her family belonged to the Faith Temple Church of God in Christ in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They attended services on Sunday, and Stewart also sang in the choir and taught bible school. Shortly after graduating high school in 1973, Stewart gave birth to her first child, Tamara Stewart. Her maternal aunt, Agnes Swan, helped babysit, and encouraged Stewart to enroll at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). She attended UWM for two years, and then decided to enroll in the fashion design program at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. There, she became interested in merchandising and business. Stewart left college to open the Ambiance hair salon and a jewelry design business. She later entered the radio industry, and worked as a general sales manager at WMCS Radio. Having achieved success in business, Stewart decided to return to school, and received her degree in 2002. Two years later, she secured a position as community outreach manager at the BloodCenter of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

Video Oral History Interview with Penelope Stewart, Section A2017_060_001_004, TRT: 4:28:45
?

Penelope Stewart joined the BloodCenter of Wisconsin in 2005. She initially worked to educate the African American community about sickle cell disease, and later managed the bone marrow donation program. Stewart went on to work at Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There, she collaborated with local churches to raise awareness about disease prevention, health care and informational resources. To address the rising infant mortality rate in Milwaukee, Stewart helped develop the Strong Baby Sanctuary Program, and partnered with local organizations to host a luncheon discussion about

reducing infant mortality. She also created the Blanket of Love Program, which offered prenatal education for mothers and assistance for poor families. At this point in the interview, Stewart talks about her children and grandchildren, as well as her plans for retirement. She reflects upon her legacy and career, and concludes the interview by describing how she would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Penelope Stewart, Section A2017_060_001_005, TRT: 5:12:44
?

Penelope Stewart narrates her photographs.