

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Karen Thomas

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Thomas, Karen, 1955-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Karen Thomas,
Dates:	October 26, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2018
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:31:35).
Abstract:	Education administrator and marketing executive Karen Thomas (1955-) served as marketing director at Essence magazine from 1982 to 2000, before serving as founder and chief executive officer the Marion P. Thomas Charter School since 1999. Thomas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 26, 2018, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2018_202
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Education administrator and marketing executive Karen Thomas was born on August 19, 1955 in Newark, New Jersey to Howard and Ruth Young. After graduating from Abraham Clark High School in 1973, Thomas received her B.S. degree in communications from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts in 1977, and her M.S. degree in sports and special events marketing from New York University in 1989. Thomas went on to receive both her M.A. degree in educational administration in 2008 and her Ed.D. degree in urban education in 2012 from Kean University in Union, New Jersey.

Upon graduating from Simmons College, Thomas worked as a copywriter in the public relations and marketing departments at Chemical Bank in New York from 1978 to 1980. She joined McGraw-Hill Publishing Company as a copywriter and worked in the book club direct marketing sales group from 1980 to 1982. From 1982 to 2000, Thomas served as marketing director at *Essence* magazine in New York City. During this time, Thomas created and produced *The Essence Awards*, an Emmy-award winning prime-time television special, *The Essence Music Festival*, and *Essence* television program. In 1999, Thomas founded Marion P. Thomas Charter School; and, a year later, she became its chief executive officer. In 2011, Thomas joined Kean University as adjunct professor for the graduate school of education where she taught organizational theory, supervision and leadership, and curriculum development. In 2019, she also served as an adjunct professor at Simmons University, where she taught a course on digital culture before retiring from academia later that year.

In 1998, she received the NAACP Image Award for Excellence in Television Production, and an Emmy Award for the *Essence Awards* Prime Time TV Special, Patti Labelle tribute. Thomas received the Alumnae Achievement Award from Simmons College in 2000. She was also the recipient of the 2015 Profiles in Diversity Journal Company and Executive Women Worth Watching Award for her contributions to education. In 2017, she received the Education Innovator of the Year Award from New Jersey Charter School Association.

Thomas resides in Paris, France, where she studies art history.

Karen Thomas was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 26, 2018.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Karen Thomas was conducted by Harriette Cole on October 26, 2018, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Education administrator and marketing executive Karen Thomas (1955-) served as marketing director at Essence magazine from 1982 to 2000, before serving as founder and chief executive officer the Marion P. Thomas Charter School since 1999.

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:

Thomas, Karen, 1955-

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Thomas, Karen, 1955- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Education Administrator

Marketing Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers|MediaMakers

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 Karen Thomas, October 26, 2018. 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 Karen Thomas, Section A2018_202_001_001, TRT: 1:29:00 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Thomas, Section A2018_202_001_002, TRT: 2:26:03 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Thomas, Section A2018_202_001_003, TRT: 3:30:03 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Thomas, Section A2018_202_001_004, TRT: 4:29:34 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Thomas, Section A2018_202_001_005, TRT: 5:30:18 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Thomas, Section A2018_202_001_006, TRT: 6:29:02 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Thomas, Section A2018_202_001_007, TRT: 7:29:27 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Thomas, Section A2018_202_001_008, TRT: 8:08:08 ?