

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Carrie L. Davis

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Davis, Carrie Lapsky 1944-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Carrie L. Davis,
Dates:	May 9, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:14:46).
Abstract:	Fashion entrepreneur Carrie L. Davis (1944 -) is formerly the owner of Cari's Designer Fashions, and has worked as a Head Start administrator for Chicago Public Schools. Davis is a lifetime member of the NAACP, and was a founder of the Lake Shore chapter of The Links, Inc. Davis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 9, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_067
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Carrie Lapsky Davis, an educator, clothing boutique owner and realtor, has been a community activist and worker in the political process since her days as a college girl participating in the Civil Rights Movement.

Born May 24, 1944 in Chicago, Davis' father was a physician and surgeon. However, Davis was raised in Port Gibson, Mississippi by her grandparents who owned a dairy. Davis graduated from Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi in 1964, the same year she married fellow Tougaloo graduate, James W. Davis, a CPA.

Coming to Chicago in 1968, Davis became a teacher. In 1973, she earned a master's degree in Education from Northwestern University. Opting for the business world, Davis opened Cari's Designer Fashions in 1988, which enabled her to travel the world in search of unique women's clothes. Closing the business ten years later, Davis worked as a Headstart administrator for the Chicago public school system.

A tireless fund-raiser, Davis worked on the campaign to elect Harold Washington, Chicago's first black mayor. She also gained financial support for Illinois Attorney General Roland Burris' and Senator Carol Mosely-Braun's campaigns.

Davis is a lifetime member of the NAACP and a member of Operation Push. She was a founder of the Lake Shore Links, a member of the Chicago Society of Mannequins and the Chicago Art Institute, Tougaloo College Alumni and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. In 1999, she was elected to the Tougaloo Hall of Fame.

The Davises are residents of Chicago's Hyde Park. They have two sons: Stephen, a lawyer and investment banker, and Christopher, a Wall Street trader.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Carrie L. Davis was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 9, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Fashion entrepreneur Carrie L. Davis (1944 -) is formerly the owner of Cari's Designer Fashions, and has worked as a Head Start administrator for Chicago Public Schools. Davis is a lifetime member of the NAACP, and was a founder of the Lake Shore chapter of The Links, Inc.

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:

Davis, Carrie Lapsky 1944-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Davis, Carrie Lapsky 1944---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Fashion Entrepreneur

HistoryMakers® Category:

StyleMakers

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 Carrie L. Davis, May 9, 2002. 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 Carrie L. Davis, Section A2002_067_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Carrie L. Davis describes her family background. Her mother, Carly Lapsky was born in Port Gibson, Mississippi. She met her husband, a Jewish physician named Lorenzo Lapsky, in Chicago, Illinois, and couple gave birth to Carrie L. Davis on May 24, 1944 in Port Gibson, Mississippi. They continued to live in Chicago, while Davis was raised by her grandparents, Carrie Lapsky and Tommy Rice, in Port Gibson. The sights and smells of Davis' childhood include magnolia trees and the smell of flowers. Davis was May Day Queen, and

enjoyed participating in church plays and going to school. Though Port Gibson was segregated, Davis did not witness racial tension in the town. She attended Port Gibson School and Addison High School, where she played trumpet in the band and was a member of the sewing club. She graduated in 1960 at the age of sixteen. Though she wanted to attend Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi to save her family's money, Carly Lapsky encouraged Davis to attend Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi. At Tougaloo, Davis was president of the Education Club, pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and traveled to Jackson, Mississippi often to watch stars like James Brown and B.B. King perform.

Video Oral History Interview with Carrie L. Davis, Section A2002_067_001_002, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Carrie L. Davis began attending Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi in 1960, where majored in education and sociology. She often traveled to Jackson, Mississippi to watch stars like Ted Turner, James Brown, Jackie Wilson perform, as well. After meeting Medgar Evers, Davis was inspired to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. She participated in her first Civil Rights demonstration, a Woolworth's sit-in, in 1962, and traveled between Tougaloo and Jackson to participate in marches. Davis brought the Civil Rights Movement to her hometown of Port Gibson, Mississippi after she demanded that a drugstore owner serve her a milkshake. Though this action caused some of Davis's family members to lose their jobs, it inspired many blacks in her hometown to challenge the status quo: many of the town's businesses shut down due to blacks' refusal to patronize them. In 1964, Davis met James Davis at the Rose Room, a club in Jackson, Mississippi. The two married in March of that year, and Davis graduated in May.

Video Oral History Interview with Carrie L. Davis, Section A2002_067_001_003, TRT: 0:29:31 ?

In 1967 James and Carrie L. Davis moved to Chicago, Illinois. They settled in the Hyde Park neighborhood and had two children, Stephen and Christopher. Davis attended the Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University, and received an M.S. degree in urban studies in 1973. In 1988, Davis opened Carrie's Designer Fashion, a boutique that specialized in selling discounted designer clothing at private home parties. She was involved in organizations like Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, The Links, Operation PUSH, and the NAACP. In 1983, Davis formed The Women's Committee to Elect Harold Washington Mayor to fundraise for Harold Washington's mayoral campaign. She also fundraised for HistoryMaker Roland Burris' campaign to be elected State Attorney General of Illinois, and HistoryMaker Carol Moseley Braun's campaign to be elected to the U.S. Senate. Davis formed a women's group entitled "Gore's Kitchen Cabinet" to raise funds for Vice President Al Gore's 2000 Presidential campaign, as well.

Video Oral History Interview with Carrie L. Davis, Section A2002_067_001_004, TRT: 0:30:11 ?

Carrie L. Davis talks about Hillary Clinton, whom she met at a dinner as a guest of U.S. Senator and HistoryMaker Carol Moseley Braun. She also talks about Tipper Gore, whom she met as a result of fundraising for Vice President Al Gore's 2000 Presidential campaign. Gore lost the 2000 Presidential Election to President George W. Bush; Davis reflects on this loss. Aside from her political fundraising efforts, Davis has remained involved in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. for over forty years. Davis talks about her sons, derivatives trader Stephen Davis and lawyer and banker Christopher Davis. She also shares her parenting philosophy, as well as her philosophy on life. Davis closes by considering how American culture has changed and narrating her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Carrie L. Davis, Section A2002_067_001_005, TRT: 0:10:55 ?

Carrie L. Davis narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Carrie L. Davis, Section A2002_067_001_006, TRT: 0:06:02 ?

Carrie L. Davis narrates her photographs.