

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Frances L. Murphy, II

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Murphy, Frances L. |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Frances L. Murphy, II, |
| Dates: | June 3, 2003 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2003 |
| Physical Description: | 4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:46:18). |
| Abstract: | Newspaper publishing chief executive and journalism professor Frances L. Murphy, II (1922 - 2007) was the former publisher of the Afro-American newspaper. Murphy was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 3, 2003, in Baltimore, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2003_117 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Born on October 8, 1922, in Baltimore, Maryland, Frances Louise Murphy, II, grew up in a household that was focused on the newspaper the family published. Murphy's grandfather, a former slave and Civil War veteran, founded the Afro-American in 1892; her father, Carl, was the editor and publisher of the paper and a professor of German at Howard University. Murphy's mother, Vashti, was one of the co-founders of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority and was trained as a teacher. Murphy taught until she married Carl Murphy; she then went on to earn her B.A. degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1944, where she majored in journalism. In 1958, Murphy earned her B.S. degree from Coppin College, and her M.Ed. degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1963.

During her summers, Murphy worked for the family paper. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, Murphy went to work full-time for the Afro-American, and the paper expanded from a single edition to numerous local editions around the country. By 1956, Murphy was the city editor for the Baltimore edition of the paper. After earning her teaching degree from Coppin College, Murphy became an elementary school teacher; she went on to pursue her master's degree in education. Frustrated with her school assignment, Murphy resigned and began teaching English and working as the director of the news bureau at Morgan State University. Murphy stayed at Morgan State until 1971, when she was named chairman of the Afro-American. In 1975, Murphy left to become a professor of journalism at State University College in Buffalo, New York, and then on to Howard University in 1985. Murphy became publisher of the Washington Afro-American in 1987, and left Howard University in 1991; she served as editor of the editorial page and wrote the column, "If You Ask Me," by Frankie Lou for several years.

Murphy was honored by numerous organizations for her achievements; she received the Women of Strength Award from the National Black Media Coalition in 1994 and 1995; the Woman of the 20th Century Award by the National Congress of Black Women; and was named one of the 100 Most Influential Black Americans by Ebony magazine. Murphy served on the boards of the Freedom Foundation, the University of the District of Columbia and the African American Civil War Memorial.

Murphy raised four children, and had seventeen grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

Frances Louise Murphy, II, passed away on Wednesday, November 21, 2007, at the age of eighty-five.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Frances L. Murphy, II was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 3, 2003, in Baltimore, Maryland, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Newspaper publishing chief executive and journalism professor Frances L. Murphy, II (1922 - 2007) was the former publisher of the Afro-American newspaper.

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:

Murphy, Frances L.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Murphy, Frances L.--Interviews

African American newspaper editors--Interviews

African American women executives--Interviews

African American women educators--Interviews

African American Newspapers

Newspaper publishing

African American families

African Americans--Social life and customs

African Americans--Genealogy

Afro-American Newspapers

Sisters

Segregation

Baltimore (Md.)

Journalism

Political science

University of Wisconsin

Howard University

State University of New York at Buffalo

Thomas, Clarence, 1948-

Barry, Marion, 1936-

Grandchildren

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Afro-American (Baltimore, Md. : National ed.)

Occupations:

Journalism Professor

Newspaper Publishing Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Frances L. Murphy, II, June 3, 2003. 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 Frances L. Murphy, II, Section A2003_117_001_001, TRT: 0:30:04 ?

Newspaper publisher Frances L. Murphy describes her family background, discusses her ancestors that founded the venerable 'Afro-American' newspapers.

Murphy discusses her father's and mother's involvement with African American leaders and talks about growing up in their household with four sisters. Murphy recalls her early memories of childhood, describing her personality and detailing the segregation in Baltimore. Murphy also talks about her education and explains how she attended college out of state.

African American newspaper editors--Interviews.

African American women executives--Interviews.

African American women educators--Interviews.

African American newspapers.

Newspaper publishing.

African American families.

African Americans--Social life and customs.

African Americans--Genealogy.

African American newspapers.

Sisters.

Segregation.

Baltimore (Md.).

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Political science.

University of Wisconsin.

Howard University.

State University of New York at Buffalo.

Thomas, Clarence, 1948-.

Barry, Marion, 1936-.

Grandchildren.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances L. Murphy, II, Section A2003_117_001_002, TRT: 0:29:48 ?

Frances L. Murphy continues to describe her youth, explaining her early interest in journalism and politics. Murphy tells of her experience at college, studying journalism at the University of Wisconsin, and talks about her return to Baltimore to join the staff of her father's newspaper, the 'Afro-American'. Murphy details her time at the 'Afro', including her rise to become editor and publisher of the paper upon the death of her father. She recalls the many notable writers and editors that helped make the 'Afro' so influential. Murphy also talks about her parallel career as a professor of journalism at Howard University and at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances L. Murphy, II, Section A2003_117_001_003, TRT: 0:30:56 ?

Frances L. Murphy details her trips abroad to Sweden and the Soviet Union to raise awareness about African American successes. She then shares her opinions about controversial political figures Clarence Thomas and Marion Barry. Murphy thinks back through her years at the 'Afro-American' newspaper and recalls the biggest scoops and crises over the years. She also shares her concerns about drugs and their negative effects on African Americans. Reflecting on her life, Murphy talks about her children and grandchildren and considers her legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Frances L. Murphy, II, Section A2003_117_001_004, TRT: 0:15:30 ?

Frances L. Murphy narrates her photographs.