

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sister Patricia Ralph

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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>	Ralph, Patricia, 1960-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Sister Patricia Ralph,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 17, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:40:42).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Elementary school principal and nun Sister Patricia Ralph (1960 - ) is the only African American nun in the Community of St. Joseph. Ralph is currently a school principal in Washington, D.C. Ralph was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 17, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_049
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Sister Patricia Anne Ralph was born on August 15, 1960, in Jersey City, New Jersey. Ralph attended elementary and junior high school at Blessed Sacrament Catholic School in Newark, New Jersey. While attending junior high school, in the eighth grade she decided she would dedicate her life to God and become a nun. In 1979, she earned her high school diploma from Benedictine Academy, a private Catholic school in Elizabeth, New Jersey. While in high school she was a cheerleader, baton twirler and a member of the dance team.

In 1985, Ralph graduated from Jersey City State College where she earned her degree in teaching. This same year she entered the Community of St. Joseph to begin her journey as a nun. There, Ralph became known as “Sister Patty” to her friends and the hundreds of students she’s taught. Currently, out of 1200 nuns, she is the only African American nun in the St. Joseph community.

In 1988, Ralph received and her first teaching assignment at St. Martin De Porres Catholic School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she taught first grade. Two years later, she was missioned to Holy Family Catholic School in Hilcrest Heights, Maryland where she was a first and second grade teacher. The following year, Ralph accepted a teaching position at Holy Name Catholic, School in Washington, D.C. She continued to teach at Holy Name for the next five years until she was named principal, a position she continues to hold today.

In 1994, she made her final vows in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania, thus completing her journey to become a nun. Surprisingly, her twin sister, Lynne Marie, decided to follow in Ralph’s footsteps and also became a nun although entering a different community, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

Ralph currently resides in Washington, D.C. Her twin sister is also a teaching nun at an elementary school in Memphis, Tennessee.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Sister Patricia Ralph was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on May 17, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Elementary school principal and nun Sister Patricia Ralph (1960 - ) is the only African American nun in the Community of St. Joseph. Ralph is currently a school principal in Washington, D.C.

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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:

Ralph, Patricia, 1960-

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Ralph, Patricia, 1960---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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Catholic Church

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## Occupations:

Nun

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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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 Sister Patricia Ralph, May 17, 2004. 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 Sister Patricia Ralph, Section A2004\_049\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:18 ?

Sister Patricia Anne Ralph talks about her parents' backgrounds and gives an overview of her large family. She remembers experiences from her childhood and then describes her elementary and high school environments. Ralph discusses her early realization of wanting to commit her life to religion.

Video Oral History Interview with Sister Patricia Ralph, Section A2004\_049\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:23 ?

Sister Patricia Anne Ralph remembers her high school and college career. Then, she moves into the beginning of her relationship with the Sisters of St. Joseph and discusses racism within the church. Ralph talks about attending Xavier University and details courses she took there and people she met. Patricia Anne Ralph explains her move into teaching elementary school as she recalls her experiences teaching at various Catholic schools.

Video Oral History Interview with Sister Patricia Ralph, Section A2004\_049\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:31 ?

Sister Patricia Anne Ralph discusses her tenure as principal at Holy Name School, Washington, D.C. She talks about the inner-city environment in which the school is located and how it has affected some students. Ralph looks back on her accomplishments as a sister and then describes how the Catholic Church has changed over the years. Patricia Anne Ralph expresses her hopes and concerns for the black community and then considers her legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Sister Patricia Ralph, Section A2004\_049\_001\_004, TRT: 0:11:30 ?

Sister Patricia Anne Ralph narrates pictures of herself with friends and family documenting important times of her life.