

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Marcella Boyd Cox

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cox, Marcella Boyd, 1954-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Marcella Boyd Cox,
Dates:	June 15, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:37:45).
Abstract:	Funeral director Marcella Boyd Cox (1954 -) serves as the vice president and manager for one of her family's three funeral homes. As a member of the Coalition of 100 Black Women, she is actively involved in promoting activities and educational opportunities that benefit the African American community. Cox was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 15, 2004, in Cleveland, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_077
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Funeral home director and community volunteer Marcella Boyd Cox was born in Cleveland, Ohio; she grew up in the city's Glenville community, known both for its concentration of African American businesses, churches, and other institutions, and as the site of some of the nation's worst racial unrest in the 1960s. Cox attended the Cleveland Public Schools and, as a student in a program for gifted and talented students, helped to integrate Collinwood Junior High School in the face of widespread and sometimes violent resistance by the majority white community. Cox later graduated from Cleveland's Lutheran East High School.

Cox completed her undergraduate coursework at Baldwin-Wallace College and Cleveland State University before turning her attention to her family's business, E.F. Boyd and Son, Inc. Funeral Homes, which served Greater Cleveland's African American community for nearly a century. After becoming a licensed funeral director in 1988, Cox went on to serve as the vice president and manager for the family's three funeral homes.

Cox became a well known figure in the community of funeral home directors and throughout the city of Cleveland. As a member of the Coalition of 100 Black Women Cox was actively involved in promoting activities that benefitted the African American community, such as educational programs on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Cox also belonged to the Cleveland Chapter of Girlfriends, Inc.; The National Council of Negro Women; Jack and Jill, Inc.; the National Funeral Directors Association; the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association; and the Advisory Board of the Love Center Interdenominational Church.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Marcella Boyd Cox was conducted by Regennia Williams on June 15, 2004, in

Cleveland, Ohio, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Funeral director Marcella Boyd Cox (1954 -) serves as the vice president and manager for one of her family's three funeral homes. As a member of the Coalition of 100 Black Women, she is actively involved in promoting activities and educational opportunities that benefit the African American community.

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:

Cox, Marcella Boyd, 1954-

Williams, Regennia (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cox, Marcella Boyd, 1954---Interviews

Undertakers and undertaking--Ohio--Cleveland--Interviews

Community activists--Ohio--Cleveland--Interviews

Neighborhood leaders--Ohio--Cleveland--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Funeral Director

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Marcella Boyd Cox, June 15, 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).

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 Marcella Boyd Cox, Section A2004_077_001_001, TRT: 0:28:26 ?

Marcella Boyd Cox was born on April 24, 1954 in Cleveland, Ohio. Her mother, Mary Webster Boyd, was born on May 20, 1917 in Cleveland, Ohio to Ina Bell

Guy Webster and Franklin Webster. Her father, William F. Boyd, Sr., was born on February 7, 1915 in Cleveland, Ohio to Elmer Franklin Boyd and Cora Stewart Boyd. In 1905, Elmer Boyd founded the family business, then known as E.F. Boyd Funeral Parlor. In 1938, the business changed to E. F. Boyd & Son Funeral Home with the addition of Cox's father, William F. Boyd, Sr. Cox grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and has one older brother, William F. Boyd, II, and one older sister, Marina Elizabeth Boyd Grant. She attended the segregated Miles Standish Elementary School and the integrated Collinwood Junior High School in Cleveland before studying for a year at the Emma Willard School in Troy, New York. After graduating from Lutheran High School East in 1972, Cox attended Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, Ohio and Cleveland State University.

Undertakers and undertaking--Ohio--Cleveland--Interviews

Community activists--Ohio--Cleveland--Interviews

Neighborhood leaders--Ohio--Cleveland--Interviews

Video Oral History Interview with Marcella Boyd Cox, Section A2004_077_001_002, TRT: 0:29:38 ?

Marcella Boyd Cox reflects on the difference between her own experience with integrated schools in Cleveland, Ohio and the experience of her children, Ina Elizabeth Cox and Tim Cox. Cox's daughter attended the Laurel School in Shaker Heights, Ohio, an all-girls school in an affluent area with a history of segregation. Cox reflects on the emergence of the Black Power Movement while she was attending the Emma Willard School in Troy, New York and the 1968 Cleveland riots after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She also reflects on the history of E.F. Boyd and Son, Inc. Funeral Homes and their role in helping the African American community. Cox goes on to talk about the organizations she is involved with including the National Coalition of 100 Black Women and the National Council of Negro Women. She then describes the Coalition's annual Women of Vision luncheon and their campaign to raise awareness about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Video Oral History Interview with Marcella Boyd Cox, Section A2004_077_001_003, TRT: 0:30:05 ?

Marcella Boyd Cox describes the importance of funerals as social rituals and their role in bringing the community together to celebrate life. She reflects on their importance historically in the African American community as well as their importance in different religions and cultures. She also comments on her experience as a funeral director and the problem of HIV and AIDS in the African American community. Cox talks about her membership in the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association and the Buckeye State Funeral Directors and Embalmers, as well as the place of women in the male-dominated industry. Cox shares her maternal family history and her mother's involvement with the family business. Cox reflects on her life and the future of E.F. Boyd and Son, Inc. Funeral Homes. She ends the interview by narrating her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Marcella Boyd Cox, Section A2004_077_001_004, TRT: 0:09:36 ?

Marcella Boyd Cox continues to narrate her photographs.