

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Marquita Pool-Eckert

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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>	Pool, Marquita J.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 29, 2005 and September 12, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	10 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:47:44).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Television news producer Marquita Pool-Eckert (1945 - ) produced the CBS Evening News and CBS Sunday Morning. Pool-Eckert's production work has been honored with several Emmy Awards. Pool-Eckert was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 29, 2005 and September 12, 2005, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_211
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Journalist and Senior Producer at CBS News, Marquita Jones Pool-Eckert was born on February 19, 1945, in Aurora, Illinois, to Jeanne Boger Jones and Mark E. Jones. She received her B.S. degree from Boston University in 1966 and her M.A. degree in journalism from Columbia University in 1969. Pool-Eckert began her career at WABC-TV in New York as producer from 1970 to 1974. From 1974 to 1975, she worked as a producer for WNET/13 Public TV and moved to CBS News as an associate producer in 1975. Pool-Eckert functioned as a producer there from 1984 to 1990, and became senior producer of *Sunday Morning* in 1990. She sat on the board of directors of Nzingha Society Incorporated from 1976 to 1989, and served as its president from 1976 to 1985. She has been a member of the New York Association of Black Journalists since 1985; the Women's Media Group since 1986; and has been on the board of directors of New York Women in Film since 1994. From 1994 until 1998, Pool-Eckert sat on the board of directors of the Frederick Douglas Creative Arts Center. She has been member Council on Foreign Relations and a member of the Friends of New York's Museum of Modern Art since 1995. She is the Metro-Manhattan chairperson of The Links Incorporated.

Pool-Eckert's honors and awards include Emmys for producing the segments "The Bombing of Beirut" and "The Vanishing Family - Crisis in Black America" in 1983. *Dollars and Sense* magazine named her one of the 100 Top Professional Black Women in 1986. She received a National Monitor Award in 1988 and an International Monitor Award for "80s Remembered" in 1990. Norfolk State University presented her with a Career Achievement Award in 1996, and she received a Black Career Women Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. Pool-Eckert received additional production Emmys for "Racism" in 1986; "Pan Am 103 Crash" in 1988; and "Diana, Princess of Wales," a *CBS Sunday Morning* piece, in 1998. She received the Muse Award from New York Women In Film and Television in 1999. Pool-Eckert married Knut Eckert on May 21, 1988.

Pool-Eckert was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 29, 2005.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert was conducted by Shawn Wilson on August 29, 2005 and September 12, 2005, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 10 Betacame SP videocassettes. Television news producer Marquita Pool-Eckert (1945 - ) produced the CBS Evening News and CBS Sunday Morning. Pool-Eckert's production work has been honored with several Emmy Awards.

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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:

Pool, Marquita J.

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Pool, Marquita J.--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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CBS/Broadcast Group (New York, N.Y.)

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## Occupations:

Television News Producer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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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 Marquita Pool-Eckert, August 29, 2005 and September 12, 2005. 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 Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:32 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert was born on February 19, 1945 in Aurora, Illinois to Jeanne Boger Jones and Mark Jones, Jr. Her maternal grandfather, Thomas Boger, Sr., earned his medical degree from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He worked at St. Charles Hospital in Aurora, Illinois. Pool-Eckert

remembers his medical practice and how his patients often paid in goods instead of cash. Her mother was of African American and Irish descent and was born in 1920 in Milwaukee. She graduated from the University of Chicago and was a schoolteacher. Pool-Eckert's father was born in 1920 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He attended Tuskegee Institute and joined the U.S. Navy. While her father was at the Naval Station Great Lakes in North Chicago, Pool-Eckert and her mother lived with her maternal grandparents in Aurora. When her father left the U.S. Navy, Pool-Eckert's family moved to Chicago, where her father purchased an apartment building, attended Loyola University Chicago School of Law and became a precinct captain.

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:38 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert shares an amusing anecdote about her father scaring her with a lobster while he was on leave from the U.S. Navy. Her family vacationed in Idlewild, Michigan, where she watched performances by entertainers who toured on the Chitlin' Circuit, like HistoryMaker Della Reese-Lett and Jackie Wilson. During the summers, she often visited her paternal grandparents in Indianapolis, Indiana. Benjamin Lewis, Chicago's first black alderman, appointed Pool-Eckert's father circuit court judge. After Lewis' murder in 1963, her father was concerned that, as a black politician, his family also might be targeted. Pool-Eckert describes how she encountered racial tensions while growing up in predominately white areas. Pool-Eckert's mother co-founded the Afro-American Genealogical and Historical Society of Chicago. Through her research there, she discovered notable ancestors like Charlie Hall, a U.S. Census Department employee, and a great uncle who served in World War I.

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:41 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert attended George Howland Elementary School in Chicago, Illinois before transferring to St. Edmund School, an all-black Episcopalian institution on the South Side. After a year, she left and attended the public William Penn Elementary School, where Pool-Eckert's teachers never called her by the correct name or gave her the grades she felt she deserved. After fighting with another student, she returned to St. Edmund School, where she became interested in joining the Episcopal Church, but her parents' objections kept her from being confirmed. The family moved to the South side of Chicago, where Pool-Eckert attended Kenwood High School and Hyde Park High School. She was involved in student council, yearbook, and the Links Cotillion at the behest of her grandmother. Pool-Eckert reflects upon her racial identity growing up and her experiences as an upper-middle class African American.

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:09 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert's father, Mark Jones, Jr., was an avid tennis player and fan who traveled to weeklong tournaments to watch Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe play. Pool-Eckert attended Boston University in Massachusetts, where she studied sociology and psychology. During the summers, she worked at Chicago City Hall filling out voter registration cards and attended demonstrations for desegregation. She remembers watching Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' speech on television and seeing him at Boston University. After graduating in 1966, she returned home and worked at the Chicago Tribune in the want ad section. Pool-Eckert shares her view on social organizations for African American youth, such as the Links and Jack and Jill. She recalls a racist incident where her grandfather was falsely accused of cheating during his last

year at Marquette University. Pool-Eckert reflects upon the continuing discrimination against the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_001\_005, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert left her job at the Chicago Tribune to move to New York City with friends. She applied for a job at Alexander's Department Store in The Bronx, but accepted a position doing research and clerical work at Time Life magazine instead. Pool-Eckert enrolled in the graduate program for journalism at Columbia University while continuing to work part-time at Time Life. At Columbia, she took classes in broadcasting and started covering the riots in New York City in 1968. After graduate school, she joined ABC's network publicity department where she created press releases for soap operas. She then became an assistant producer at WABC-TV for the series 'Like It Is,' where she covered issues of imminent domain, labor strikes and regularly had Kwame Ture as a guest. She also decided to air an unedited taped statement made by Angela Davis after her arrest that Joe Walker, the editor of Muhammad Speaks, gave to Pool-Eckert to feature on 'Like It Is.'

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_001\_006, TRT: 0:29:11 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert remembers the controversy that followed her airing an unedited statement from Angela Davis on the TV show 'Like It Is.' Pool-Eckert left WABC-TV and worked for Channel 13 at the Public Broadcasting Service for a year before she was let go. She then was hired as a producer for 'Assignment America,' where she worked on interviews of notable individuals, including HistoryMaker Maya Angelou and James Baldwin. Pool-Eckert left 'Assignment America' for 'CBS This Morning.' After a year with the show, she decided to apply to the American Film Institute and pursue her interest in making movies. However, she accepted an offer to join 'CBS Evening News' instead, and she eventually became a field producer for the show. She remembers the negative work environment at CBS and the hostility she faced as the only African American woman. Pool-Eckert won two Emmys in 1983 for her work on 'The Vanishing Family - Crisis in Black America' and 'The Bombing of Beirut.'

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_002\_007, TRT: 0:29:55 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert recalls the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina for New Orleans, Louisiana. She shares her concerns about the displacement of the city's population of poor African Americans, and the challenges they face in being able to return to the city. In reflecting upon the coverage of the Rodney King incident, Pool-Eckert notes how technology has helped democratize the media. In recalling the Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill controversy, she shares her opinion that issues of race impacted the publicity surrounding the allegations of sexual harassment. Pool-Eckert landed an assignment covering HistoryMaker Reverend Jesse L. Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign. She recalls the unusually high number of African American journalists assigned to the campaign, and the controversy that erupted when The Washington Post reported that Jackson referred to New York City as "Hymietown" in a private meeting.

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_002\_008, TRT: 0:29:38 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert joined 'CBS Evening News' with Dan Rather in the late 1970s. She was assigned to cover HistoryMaker Reverend Jesse L. Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign, and she remembers his speech at the Democratic

National Convention. She reflects upon the controversy surrounding his campaign when it was alleged that he made anti-Semitic remarks. In describing the competitiveness among journalists, she notes how print journalists often have greater access to interviewees than broadcast journalists do. In 1984, Pool-Eckert traveled to Sudan to cover the famine in Africa. While there, she tried to interview Sudanese politician John Garang, but was dissuaded after a group of reporters visiting him went missing for six days. Pool-Eckert also traveled to relief camps set up by the American Red Cross, Amnesty International, and the Catholic Relief Services, where she saw the Sudanese peoples' struggles to obtain basic necessities. She returned to Africa in 1987 to cover the Ethiopian famine.

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_002\_009, TRT: 0:29:25 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert traveled to Africa for stories during her tenure as a producer for 'CBS Evening News.' She remembers the challenges journalists faced, including the need for government approval to hold interviews. As a Western woman traveling in an Islamic country, she often encountered locals who were surprised that she was in a position of authority. Pool-Eckert was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1989. She left her job at 'CBS Evening News' and became senior producer for the 'CBS News Sunday Morning' show, which was less strenuous. Pool-Eckert talks about the growing number of African Americans working in television. At the time of the interview, she was still one of the higher ranking African Americans, but there were many entering the field. She remembers those who helped her during her career and describes the importance of the National Association of Black Journalists in helping graduates find jobs and make connections.

Video Oral History Interview with Marquita Pool-Eckert, Section A2005\_211\_002\_010, TRT: 0:18:25 ?

Marquita Pool-Eckert describes the importance of internships for college graduates who may be unfamiliar with their chosen careers. In reflecting upon her life, Pool-Eckert recalls the most notable news stories she covered as a journalist and how TV coverage of the Civil Rights Movement ignited her interest in television as a teenager. She concludes the tape by describing how she would like to be remembered and by narrating her photographs.