

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Zonia T. Way

PERSON

Way, Zonia T., 1905-

Alternative Names: Zonia T. Way;

Life Dates: May 9, 1905-July 10, 2015

Place of Birth: Meridian, Mississippi, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Interior Design Consultant

Biographical Note

Longtime Chicago resident Zonia Thomas Way was born Zonia Matticx on May 9, 1905, in Meridian, Mississippi. Her grandfather founded St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church in Meridian. Way's mother, Virginia Anna Shields Matticx, who taught Greek and Latin at Meridian College (later named Haven College) met Way's father, Frank Henry Matticx (who was half French and half Choctaw Indian), in college. Way attended Meridian Academy and later attended Meridian's Colored Public School. When Way's mother died in 1915, her father relocated to Chicago, remarried, and then sent for his daughter in 1918.

In Chicago, Way attended Doolittle Elementary School and Hyde Park High School, where she was an honor student and a member of the Girl's Reserves. Her stepmother, Grace Abney Garnett Matticx, frequently entertained black business leaders and notables like Congressman Oscar de Priest, Provident Hospital leader Dr. George Cleveland Hall, Dr. T.K. Lawless, Chicago Defender publisher Robert S. Abbott, banker Jesse Binga, and Illinois State Representative Louis B. Anderson.

Way's first job was in a hat shop in 1925. That same year, she met Walker V. Thomas, a dental student. Soon they married, and Way for many years was an active part of civic life on Chicago's South Side and in Idlewilde, Michigan. She joined the Church of the Good Shepherd in 1934 and was a member of the Douglass Chapter of the League of Women Voters, the YWCA board, the Meharry Auxiliary and the Dentists Wives Club. After her husband died in 1949, Way made draperies and sold them to clients. In 1960, she married John Way and continued to design draperies and do interior design. A former president of the Seniors Club of Parkway Gardens, Way designs and teaches crafts.

Over one hundred years old, Way has a grown daughter, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Related Entries

Hyde Park Academy High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

James R. Doolittle, Jr. Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Meridian Academy [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Aragon Draperies [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Douglass League of Women Voters [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Girl Reserves [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

President

Dentist's Wives Club of Chicago [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member

Meharry Auxiliary [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Member