

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Lucille Whipper

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Whipper, Lucille, 1928-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Lucille Whipper,
Dates:	February 1, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:48:21).
Abstract:	State government administrator and academic administrator The Honorable Lucille Whipper (1928 - 2021) served as the organizer and director of Operation Catch-Up, the vice chairman of the Democratic Convention in 1972, a member of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission, and the first African American administrator at the College of Charleston. Whipper was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 1, 2007, in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_039
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Academic administrator and state government administrator Lucille Simmons Whipper was born on June 6, 1928 in Charleston, South Carolina, to Sarah and Joseph Simmons. In 1944, Whipper was a student activist at her high school, Avery Institute, in Charleston, South Carolina; her graduating class sought to desegregate the College of Charleston. While a student at Talladega College, where she received her B.A. degree in economics and sociology, Whipper became involved in a movement to integrate college student organizations throughout the state. Whipper continued her graduate education in political science at the University of Chicago where she received her M.A. degree. Whipper also later earned a certificate in guidance and counseling at South Carolina State University.

In the late 1960s, Whipper served as an organizer and director of Operation Catch-Up, a tutorial program for high school students; Operation Catch-Up was a forerunner of the Upward Bound programs. In 1972, Whipper was appointed to serve as Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Human Relations at the College of Charleston. Whipper became the College's first African American administrator and developed its first affirmative action plan. With the support of members of the Charleston County delegation and the President of College of Charleston, Theodore Stern, Whipper organized the Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture committee. The committee then founded the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in 1990.

Whipper served as vice chairman of the Democratic Party Convention in 1972 and was later elected to the Charleston District 20 School Board. In 1985, Whipper became the first African American female to serve as an elected state official from the Tri-County area. Whipper served for years on South Carolina Human Affairs Commission and sponsored two important pieces of legislation — one making marital rape a crime and the other

requiring the monitoring of state agencies' hiring goals for minorities and females. In 2004, Whipper co-founded the Lowcountry Aid to Africa project, donating money to foundations and organizations helping people and families in Africa affected by AIDS.

Lucille Simmons Whipper was married to the late Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Whipper, Sr., and lives in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. She is the mother of six children and is a grandparent.

Lucille Simmons Whipper was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 1, 2007.

Whipper passed away on August 27, 2021.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Lucille Whipper was conducted by Denise Gines on February 1, 2007, in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. State government administrator and academic administrator The Honorable Lucille Whipper (1928 - 2021) served as the organizer and director of Operation Catch-Up, the vice chairman of the Democratic Convention in 1972, a member of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission, and the first African American administrator at the College of Charleston.

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:

Whipper, Lucille, 1928-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Whipper, Lucille, 1928- --Interviews

African American educators--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Cultural Center Founder

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 The Honorable Lucille Whipper, February 1, 2007.
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 The Honorable Lucille Whipper, Section A2007_039_001_001, TRT: 0:28:21 ?

The Honorable Lucille Whipper was born on June 6, 1928 in Charleston, South Carolina to Sarah Marie Washington Stroud and Joseph Simmons. Her father was born in Charleston, and served in the U.S. military during World War I. He later became a fisherman, and traveled often. Her mother was also born in Charleston; and, from the age of two years old, was raised by an adoptive mother, who owned property and emphasized education. Whipper's mother attended Morris College, but left before graduation to elope with Whipper's father. Her parents had two children, and separated when Whipper was young. Her mother then married her stepfather, carpenter and craftsman Edward Stroud, whom she met while they were both employed at the local cigar factory. Whipper's stepfather later lost his position for leading a strike to unionize the factory's workers, and he and her mother secured positions at the Charleston Naval Shipyard. Whipper also remembers attending Baptist revivals with her younger sister, Gertrude Simmons Huger.

African American families--South Carolina--Charleston.

Children of divorced parents.

African Americans—Social life and customs—South Carolina-Charleston.

Tobacco workers--South Carolina--Charleston--Labor unions.

Factories--Employees--Labor unions--South Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Lucille Whipper, Section A2007_039_001_002, TRT: 0:28:12 ?

The Honorable Lucille Whipper was raised in the Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina, where her maternal grandfather, Joseph Washington, was a deacon. Whipper began her studies at the all-black St. Stephen's Episcopal Church School; and, at four years old, was assigned to the first grade. She later transferred to the Buist School, and became an avid reader. After completing the eighth grade at the Burke Industrial School, Whipper attended the private Avery Normal Institute, where she experienced color discrimination. She was also active in the choir and Tri-Hi-Y club; and, with teacher Margaret Rutland Poinsette's support, won first place in an oratorical contest for her recitation of Margaret Walker's 'For My People.' Another teacher, John H. Wrighten, Jr., encouraged Whipper's graduating class to apply to the all-white College of Charleston. Whipper was denied admission there; and instead, upon graduating in 1944, accepted a scholarship to Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama.

African Americans--Education (Secondary).

African Americans--Education (Elementary).

Avery Normal Institute.

Segregation in higher education--South Carolina--Charleston.

Desegregation in higher education--South Carolina--Charleston.

Talladega College.

United States--Social conditions--1933-1945.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Lucille Whipper, Section A2007_039_001_003,
TRT: 0:29:25 ?

The Honorable Lucille Whipper graduated salutatorian of her class at the Avery Normal Institute in Charleston, South Carolina in 1944, and a student with lighter skin was chosen as valedictorian. Whipper attended Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama, where she joined Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. When her sorority organized the first integrated student group in Alabama, the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross on campus. In response, Whipper's group rallied in Birmingham, Alabama, where their protest against segregation was joined by Vice President Henry A. Wallace. At Talladega College, Whipper studied sociology and economics, and wrote her thesis on union leadership at the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. She graduated in 1948, and married her first husband, Steven Edley, with whom she had one son. Whipper went on to earn a master's degree in political science from the University of Chicago in 1955. She then taught at the Haut Gap School on Johns Island, South Carolina; and married Benjamin Whipper, Sr.

Talladega College--Social life and customs.

African American educators--South Carolina--Charleston.

African American couples.

College students--Political activity.

Gullahs.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Suicide victims--Family relationships.

Political science--Study and teaching.

University of Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Lucille Whipper, Section A2007_039_001_004,
TRT: 0:28:46 ?

The Honorable Lucille Whipper taught at Bonds-Wilson High School in North Charleston, South Carolina, while commuting to South Carolina State College in Orangeburg, South Carolina to become certified as a counselor. At Bonds-Wilson High School, she advocated to include college preparatory courses in the curriculum, and worked with the A Better Chance program, which identified students to attend preparatory summer courses at schools in the Northeast. In 1965, Whipper became the director of the counseling department at Charleston's Burke High School, where she helped her students organize a march to protest conditions at the school. She also established Operation Catch-Up, which employed graduate students as college preparatory tutors for her students. In 1972, Whipper became the director of human relations and first African American administrator at the College of Charleston. She also recalls her activism at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, and within the Democratic Party.

African American educators--South Carolina--Charleston.

African American high school students--United States.

Student assistance programs.

Democratic Party (Charleston County, S.C.).

Desegregation in higher education--South Carolina--Charleston.

College of Charleston.

Avery Normal Institute.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Lucille Whipper, Section A2007_039_001_005,
TRT: 0:28:09 ?

The Honorable Lucille Whipper was approached by archivist Margaretta Pringle Childs to help preserve the Avery Normal Institute in Charleston, South Carolina, which was slated for development as condominiums. Whipper gathered alumni, staff from the College of Charleston and members of the Links, Incorporated; and the group submitted a grant request to the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture was established on the property in 1980. Then, Whipper was elected to Charleston's constituent school board, and later campaigned to represent District 109. In 1986, Whipper became Charleston's first African American female state legislator. In this capacity, she served on the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission alongside Congressman James Clyburn, and worked with state representative Herbert U. Fielding to pass a bill prohibiting marital rape. Whipper also talks about the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus, and district gerrymandering.

Avery Normal Institute--History.

Avery Center (Charleston, S.C.).

Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture.

College of Charleston.

African Americans--South Carolina.

South Carolina. General Assembly. House of Representatives.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Lucille Whipper, Section A2007_039_001_006,
TRT: 0:25:28 ?

The Honorable Lucille Whipper served in the South Carolina House of Representatives for ten years. In 1996, she chose not to run for reelection in order to care for her husband, Benjamin Whipper, Sr., who was ill. Whipper mentored David J. Mack, III, who succeeded her in the District 109 seat. In recognition of Whipper's service, Mack named the Lucille S. Whipper Interchange highway in her honor. With the Links, Incorporated, Whipper visited South Africa, and established the Low Country Aid to Africa program to assist African communities and raise money for families affected by HIV/AIDS. Concurrently, Whipper served as president of the state women's Baptist convention, where she directed a project to document the history of the organization in 'Born to Serve: A History of the Woman's Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina,' by W. Marvin Dulaney. Whipper reflects upon her life and message to future generations. She then concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.

Avery Center (Charleston, S.C.).

African American women--Societies and clubs--South Carolina.

Women in charitable work.

Charities, medical--Africa.

Baptist associations--South Carolina.

Links, Inc.