

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Hattie B. Dorsey

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dorsey, Hattie B., 1939-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Hattie B. Dorsey,
Dates:	September 13, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:06:47).
Abstract:	Community activist Hattie B. Dorsey (1939 -) is the former president of the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership. As president, she worked to solidify Metro Atlanta neighborhoods and community development corporations. Dorsey was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 13, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_259
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Founder and former president of the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership (ANDP), Hattie Beleatha Dorsey was born the eldest of eleven children on May 31, 1939 in Teachey, North Carolina. When Dorsey was an adolescent, her family moved to New York City where she attended Charles Evan Hughes High School. As a high school student, Dorsey took courses in fashion design and interior design. The Dorsey Family moved to Atlanta where she attended David T. Howard High School. Her father was the residing pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Atlanta and chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Operation Bread Basket. She is a first cousin to the father of gospel music great Thomas A. Dorsey.

After attending Spelman College, Dorsey transferred to Clark Atlanta University. In 1964, Dorsey graduated from Clark Atlanta University with her B.S. degree in secretarial science. Dorsey performed secretarial work for various companies, until she became an administrative assistant for the National Urban League. Dorsey continued her civil rights work by working on the NAACP's legal defense team throughout the 1970s and 1980s, helping to bring landmark legal suits against those who practiced housing discrimination. Dorsey worked for Stanford Mid-Peninsula Urban Coalition on Affordable Housing in San Francisco, California before becoming director of the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership.

As president of ANDP, Dorsey worked to solidify Metro Atlanta neighborhoods and community development corporations. Under Dorsey's leadership, issues related to public housing became a regional priority. A larger part of Dorsey's success as ANDP's president resided in her ability to develop financial resources from all sectors – private, public and philanthropic. In 1995, ANDP launched a \$16 million capital campaign to accelerate housing construction and innovation in preparation for the Olympic Games.

Dorsey has received many awards and honors including the 2005 Spelman College Local Community Service Award; *Atlanta Woman* magazine's nominee for Woman of the Year, *Georgia Trend* magazine's "2004 Notable

Georgians”, 2001 Honoree of Women Looking Ahead; 2003 Inductee into the Atlanta Business League’s Women Hall of Fame, The Georgia Black Caucus Grace Towns Hamilton Leadership Award, and the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Golden Glasses Award.

Dorsey and her daughter, Victoria “Michelle,” live in Atlanta.

Dorsey was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 13, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Hattie B. Dorsey was conducted by Denise Gines on September 13, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Community activist Hattie B. Dorsey (1939 -) is the former president of the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership. As president, she worked to solidify Metro Atlanta neighborhoods and community development corporations.

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:

Dorsey, Hattie B., 1939-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dorsey, Hattie B., 1939- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Community Activist

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 Hattie B. Dorsey, September 13, 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 Hattie B. Dorsey, Section A2007_259_001_001, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Hattie B. Dorsey describes her family background. Her mother, Gladys Alderman Dorsey, was born in Teachey, North Carolina in 1919 to a prominent landowning family in the area. She was thirteen when her mother, Mary Jane Jenkins, died, so she was raised by her aunt and Dorsey's namesake, Hattie Jane Alderman, whom Dorsey considers her grandmother. Gladys attended Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. Dorsey's father, the Reverend Edward Henry "E.H." Dorsey, was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1914 to the Reverend Joseph T. Dorsey of Mount Zion Baptist Church and Ara Morinda Thurman Dorsey. E.H. and Gladys met in a New York City church where he sang and she played the organ. For a time, Gladys was also courted by E.H.'s cousin, gospel singer Thomas A. Dorsey, but she eventually married E.H. and had eleven children. The first of these, Dorsey was born May 31, 1939 in Teachey and raised in New York. Her earliest memory is of being hospitalized at the Roslyn, New York Home for Cardiac Children from 1949 to 1951.

Video Oral History Interview with Hattie B. Dorsey, Section A2007_259_001_002, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Hattie B. Dorsey recalls her childhood. Her family was full of musical talent; her mother was a pianist, and her father enjoyed singing. Dorsey's father's cousin was Thomas A. Dorsey, a famous gospel musician and composer who wrote for and toured with singer Mahalia Jackson. While Dorsey was growing up in Brooklyn, New York, her father owned a dry cleaning business, before studying to become a minister at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. From 1949 to 1951, Dorsey was hospitalized with rheumatic fever at St. Francis Hospital and Sanatorium for Cardiac Children in Roslyn, New York, where she was bedridden for most of the first year. At St. Francis, she became an avid reader and received an advanced Catholic school education, which placed her ahead of her peers when she returned to public education at P.S. 26 in Brooklyn. Apart from her years in the hospital, Dorsey grew up with ten siblings in a mixed-income Brooklyn neighborhood, which inspired her later work in community development.

Video Oral History Interview with Hattie B. Dorsey, Section A2007_259_001_003, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Hattie B. Dorsey talks about her elementary and middle school years at P.S. 26 in Brooklyn, New York. She recalls her home life and remembers her mother as a strict disciplinarian. Dorsey describes the traits she shares with her mother, including a talent for sewing, which prompted her to attend Straubenmuller Textile High School where she studied fashion and interior design. At age fifteen in 1954, she moved with her mother to Teachey, North Carolina, where she attended Charity High School in Rose Hill. Meanwhile, her father, the Reverend Edward Henry "E.H." Dorsey, remained in New York to finish his degree at Union Theological Seminary. By 1955, E.H. was convinced by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr. to accept a position as a minister in Atlanta, Georgia. Dorsey's family moved there, where she attended David T. Howard High School, a segregated high school. Dorsey describes the nurturing environment that challenged her to focus academically and pursue a college education. She graduated in 1957.

Video Oral History Interview with Hattie B. Dorsey, Section A2007_259_001_004, TRT: 0:28:07 ?

Hattie B. Dorsey describes the nurturing environment at Howard High School in Atlanta, Georgia where her teachers encouraged her to pursue a college education. In 1957, Dorsey enrolled at Spelman College, a Baptist institution in Atlanta, but felt constrained by Spelman's paternalism toward her. After one semester, she transferred to Clark College in Atlanta where she majored in secretarial science, graduating in 1962. Meanwhile, Dorsey's father, the

Reverend Edward Henry “E.H.” Dorsey, assumed a leadership role in the Atlanta Civil Rights Movement as head of the local chapter of the SCLC's Operation Breadbasket. Dorsey describes Atlanta's black church community. In 1964, she married and moved to Washington, D.C. where she worked as an administrative assistant for the U.S. Department of the Interior. She describes an experience of racial discrimination there. In 1966, she joined Georgia Representative Charles Weltner's staff, and in 1968, Dorsey became an administrative assistant at the National Urban League.

Video Oral History Interview with Hattie B. Dorsey, Section A2007_259_001_005, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Hattie B. Dorsey describes her nonprofit career. In 1968, she briefly worked for the National Urban League in Washington, D.C. under HistoryMakers Sterling Tucker and John E. Jacob. After divorcing her first husband, Dorsey returned to Atlanta, Georgia at the urging of her father, Reverend E.H. Dorsey. In Atlanta, she first worked for the federal Model Cities Program, and then for Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. During this period, her father was arrested for civil disobedience, and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. In 1971, Dorsey joined the Urban League in Oakland, California and later worked at the Urban Coalition in Stanford, California where she rose from the position of administrative assistant to director of resource development. In 1982, Dorsey moved to New York with her adopted daughter after divorcing her second husband. In New York, she joined the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation before HistoryMaker Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. convinced her to return to Atlanta in 1984.

Video Oral History Interview with Hattie B. Dorsey, Section A2007_259_001_006, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Hattie B. Dorsey describes her career in community development after returning to Atlanta, Georgia where she was friends with Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, and HistoryMakers Julian Bond, Xernona Clayton, and Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. In 1984, she worked for the Voter Education Project before joining the Atlanta Economic Development Corporation (AEDC). At AEDC, Dorsey focused on affordable housing and community development, and founded the AEDC Neighborhood Development Department despite pushback from her superiors. In 1991, she created the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, which helped to develop communities like Reynoldstown and the Turner Field area. She also talks about Atlanta's winning bid for the 1996 Summer Olympics. Dorsey reflects on her professional legacy and on rising housing costs as an unintended consequence of urban renewal. She describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community and talks about her leadership in 100 Black Women and the Democratic Party of Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Hattie B. Dorsey, Section A2007_259_001_007, TRT: 0:12:30 ?

Hattie B. Dorsey narrates her photographs.