

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hilliard, Patsy Jo, 1937-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard,
Dates:	July 15, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2010
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:08:31).
Abstract:	Education administrator and mayor The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard (1937 -) was the first African American and the first female mayor of East Point, Georgia. She served on the Executive Board of the Atlanta NAACP and as President of the Atlanta chapters of The Links, Inc. and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Hilliard was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 15, 2010, in East Point, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2010_085
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard was born on August 20, 1937 in Denver, Colorado. Her father, Elmer Dudley Morrison II, was a chair car attendant, while her mother, Jessie Morrison, was a model. In 1955, Hilliard graduated from Manual High School in Denver, which she attended with her future husband, Asa Hilliard, III. She took classes at Los Angeles State College and worked as a playground supervisor for the Los Angeles public schools in 1956. Hilliard received her B.A. degree in interdisciplinary social sciences from San Francisco State University in 1976. In 2008, Sojourner-Douglass College in Baltimore, Maryland presented her with an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

Hilliard has a decades-long career working in schools. From 1956 to 1961, she was a summer playground supervisor for the Denver Public School System. In 1964, Hilliard taught first grade at Bright Functions School in Monrovia, Liberia. While in Liberia, she also served as volunteer coordinator for the organization American Women in Liberia. In 1975, Hilliard became the first African American and the first woman board member of the South San Francisco Unified School District, a position she filled until 1980. Hilliard made history again in 1993 when she was elected mayor of East Point, Georgia. She was both the first woman and the first African American ever elected to that position. Hilliard remained mayor until 2006, longer than any other East Point mayor. In 2007, Hilliard hosted a television talk show entitled “In the Know with Patsy Jo.” She now serves as CEO of Waset Educational Production Company, which she founded in collaboration with her husband, and leads educational tours to Egypt with the organization Ancient African Study Tours.

Throughout her career, Hilliard has worked with many organizations, including the East Point Business Association, the Fulton County School District’s Superintendents Advisory Board, the Atlanta Airport Rotary Club, the Atlanta High Museum of Art, and the DeYoung Museum of Art. She has served on the Executive Board

for the Atlanta chapter of the NAACP, and has served as President for the Atlanta chapter of Links, Inc. and the Atlanta Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Hilliard has received dozens of awards, including the Drum Major for Justice Award from the SCLC, the Torch Award from the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and a Public Service Award from Alpha Kappa Alpha. In addition to being counted one of the 100 Most Influential Black Women for six years, she has been inducted into the Atlanta Business League Women's Hall of Fame.

Hilliard has four children and is the widow of famous historian and EducationMaker Asa G. Hilliard III.

Patsy Jo Hilliard was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 15, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard was conducted by Denise Gines on July 15, 2010, in East Point, Georgia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Education administrator and mayor The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard (1937 -) was the first African American and the first female mayor of East Point, Georgia. She served on the Executive Board of the Atlanta NAACP and as President of the Atlanta chapters of The Links, Inc. and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

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:

Hilliard, Patsy Jo, 1937-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Hilliard, Patsy Jo, 1937- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

East Point (Ga.)

Occupations:

Mayor

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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 Patsy Jo Hilliard, July 15, 2010. 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 Patsy Jo Hilliard, Section A2010_085_001_001, TRT: 0:29:37 ?

The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard was born on August 20, 1937 in Denver, Colorado to Jessie Martin Morrison and Elmer Morrison II. Hilliard's paternal great-great-grandfather, Robert Thomas, established a school in Chicago, Illinois for African American students and her great-grandmother, Archer, served as Illinois' first African American juror before settling in New York City. Her paternal grandfather, Elmer Morrison I, was born in New York City, but moved to Denver, where he married Margaret Green, who worked at the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center. After their divorce, Morrison remarried to Edith Morrison, while Green married foundry worker James Green. Hilliard's father was born and raised in Denver, and spent some time travelling the country as a young adult. Upon his return to Denver, he became a railroad porter. Hilliard's mother was born in Claremore, Oklahoma to Ida Martin and teacher Jesse Martin, but was raised in Denver from an early age.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard, Section A2010_085_001_002, TRT: 0:28:52 ?

The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard's maternal grandfather, Jesse Martin, was born in Arkansas and her grandmother, Ida Martin, originated from Oklahoma. After their wedding, they settled in Claremore, Oklahoma, where Hilliard's grandfather worked as a teacher. The family then moved to Denver, Colorado due to the poor health of Hilliard's grandmother. In Denver, Hilliard's mother, Jessie Martin Morrison, became a hairdresser and model. In addition to her sponsorship of Hilliard's Camp Fire Girls of America troop, her mother also started her own charm school called Jessie Morrison's School of Charm, which worked with the local Young Men's Christian Association and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. chapter. Hilliard attended Whittier Elementary School, and belonged to Campbell Chapel A.M.E. Church and St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church in Denver. She was close with her extended family, and often travelled with her brother, Elmer Morrison III, to visit her maternal grandparents in Los Angeles, California.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard, Section A2010_085_001_003, TRT: 0:28:45 ?

The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard attended Cole Junior High School in the predominately black neighborhood of Denver, Colorado, where her neighbors included future mayors, Norman Rice and Wellington Webb, and Colorado State Legislator Wilma J. Webb. Although most African Americans lived in one area of the city, the public spaces were integrated, and Hilliard visited the Central Library and Denver Art Museum frequently. After junior high school, Hilliard attended Denver's Manual High School, where she participated in student government, the pep club and cheerleading. Upon graduating, Hilliard applied to become an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but was rejected from the program due to her gender and short stature. She then decided to study education at the Los Angeles State College of Applied Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles, California. She recalls meeting her husband, educator Asa Hilliard, III, as a teenager in Denver. Hilliard also remembers the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard, Section A2010_085_001_004, TRT: 0:29:43 ?

The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard studied elementary education at the Los Angeles State College of Applied Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles, California. While there, she also worked as a public school playground director in the city's Watts neighborhood. After one year, Hilliard returned to Denver, Colorado to marry Asa Hilliard, III. She continued her education at Colorado State College, and worked for Denver Public Schools. She also became a volunteer precinct committeewoman while also raising her children. In 1963, Hilliard and her family moved to San Francisco, California when her husband accepted a teaching position at San Francisco State College. Soon after, the family relocated to Monrovia, Liberia to establish educational programs through the Peace Corps. There, Hilliard met Liberian politician Joseph Rudolph Grimes, and became involved with the American Women in Liberia and the Order of the Eastern Star. She also established the Liberian chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard, Section A2010_085_001_005, TRT: 0:30:23 ?

The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard returned to San Francisco, California in 1970 after living abroad in Monrovia, Liberia. Hilliard completed her teaching degree at San Francisco State University, and became the first African American woman to serve on the board of the South San Francisco Unified School District. In 1976, Hilliard moved with her family to Atlanta, Georgia. There, Hilliard became the campaign manager for East Point City Council candidate, Joe Heckstall. When Heckstall won the seat, he appointed Hilliard to the Planning and Zoning Commission. She acted as his campaign manager for his next three terms until he convinced her to run for mayor of East Point, Georgia. With the help of her daughter, Robi Hilliard Herron, Hilliard was elected mayor in 1993. During her tenure, Hilliard started a popular community prayer breakfast, which featured speakers like Reverend Dr. C.T. Vivian; and established the East Point Branch public library, East Point Grady Health Center and the Camp Creek Marketplace.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard, Section A2010_085_001_006, TRT: 0:29:52 ?

The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard served as a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and National League of Cities during her term as mayor of East Point, Georgia. With the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Hilliard travelled internationally to meet with regional politicians in Japan, China and Italy. From these travels, Hilliard was inspired to develop new arts programs and senior citizens facilities in East Point. She also travelled to Africa with Denver Mayor Wellington Webb and his wife, Wilma J. Webb, as a member of the National Conference of Black Mayors. During this time, Hilliard also made annual trips to Egypt with her husband, Asa Hilliard, III, who was conducting research. Upon her retirement in 2005, Hilliard became the longest running mayor in East Point, having served for thirteen years. She then turned her focus to her radio show, 'In the Know with Patsy Jo,' and her involvement with the NAACP and Order of the Eastern Star. Hilliard reflects upon her life and shares her advice for future generations.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard, Section A2010_085_001_007, TRT: 0:11:19 ?

The Honorable Patsy Jo Hilliard narrates her photographs.