

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sharon Hall

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hall, Sharon, 1956-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Hall,
Dates:	February 18, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:39:37).
Abstract:	Corporate chief executive Sharon Hall (1956 -) was a partner at Spencer Stuart, where she founded the diversity practice and served as director of the board. She was also a general manager at Avon Products Inc. and a strategist at Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. Hall was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 18, 2014, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_027
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Corporate chief executive Sharon Hall was born in 1956 in Chicago, Illinois to Barbara and Wallace Hall. She attended Catholic grade school and graduated from Bloom Township High School in Chicago Heights, Illinois in 1974. In 1978, Hall graduated magna cum laude from Morris Brown College with her B.S. degree in business management. She went on to be a Consortium fellow at the University of Southern California, where she earned her M.B.A degree in venture management in 1982.

In 1978, Hall was hired as assistant brand manager at Procter & Gamble. In 1982, she began working as a consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton. She was hired as manager of strategic planning for Pacific markets at Avon in 1984, and by 1992, she worked her way up to being general manager of the Avon's new business development group. In 1997, Hall was hired at the executive search firm Spencer Stuart, where she became partner in 2001. She is a member of the firm's human resources and consumer practice specialties. She founded the firm's Diversity Practice in 1999, and began serving as a global diversity practice leader. Hall became the only African American to ever serve on the board of Spencer Stuart in 2005, and managed the firm's Atlanta office for five years.

Hall has been widely recognized for her success in business. In 1987, Hall was named an Outstanding International Business Woman by Dollars & Sense Magazine. She was recognized by Avon with its Chairman's Award in 1990 and 1992. She participated in the 1992 marketing strategy development for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America; and became a board director at the Kansas City Urban League in 1994. Spencer Stuart awarded Hall the Q-Firm Award in 2000. In 2006, she was awarded by Women Worth Watching; and in 2008, she was included on The Essence Power List. Hall was a featured speaker at the 2010 Women on Wall Street Conference, and is a speaker at the 2014 Black Enterprise Women of Power Summit.

Hall has been interviewed or featured in the publications *Fortune Magazine*, *Dollars & Sense Magazine*, *Business to Business*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and *Black Enterprise*.

Hall lives in Atlanta, Georgia and has two children, Christopher and Casey.

Sharon Hall was interviewed by The History Makers on February 18, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Sharon Hall was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 18, 2014, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Corporate chief executive Sharon Hall (1956 -) was a partner at Spencer Stuart, where she founded the diversity practice and served as director of the board. She was also a general manager at Avon Products Inc. and a strategist at Booz Allen Hamilton 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:

- Hall, Sharon, 1956-
- Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)
- Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

- African Americans--Interviews
 - Hall, Sharon, 1956---Interviews
-

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Corporate Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Sharon Hall, February 18, 2014. 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 Sharon Hall, Section B2014_027_001_001, TRT: 1:29:56 ?

Sharon Hall was born on December 11, 1956 in Chicago, Illinois to Barbara Hughes Hall and Wallace Hall. Her maternal great-grandmother, Alice Ridley, moved to Chicago from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Her daughter, Sarah Jackson

Hughes, joined her in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood at the age of eighteen years old. She was a talented seamstress, and worked as a maid at the Palmer House Hotel. Hall's paternal grandmother, Myrtle Hall Marshall, also lived in Chicago. She was a single mother during the Great Depression, and became a landlord to support her children. Hall's father began working at a stable and selling peaches at the age of eight years old. Three years later, he left his childhood home. He went on to attend Chicago's DuSable High School, and studied business at Roosevelt College. He later became a pharmacist at the black-owned Food Basket grocery store, and met Hall's mother while she was visiting her mother, who managed the liquor counter.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Hall, Section B2014_027_001_002, TRT: 2:27:30 ?

Sharon Hall's maternal grandmother, Sarah Jackson Hughes, belonged to the Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Chicago, Illinois. Hall's father, Wallace Hall, converted to Catholicism upon marrying her mother, Barbara Hughes Hall. They sent Hall and her sister, Karon Hall Cofield, to the St. Dorothy School, where they were taught by Father George Clements. After moving to South Shore, Hall transferred to the St. Philip Neri Catholic School. Her father became a salesman for the Johnson Products Company, where Hall and her sister worked as hair models. Later, the family moved to Canterbury Gardens in Markham, Illinois, where Hall attended St. Gerard Majella School. Hall's father was highly entrepreneurial, and used his sales training to inform his parenting style. He arranged for Hall to meet black businesswomen, including a brand manager from the Quaker Oats Company. At the time of her graduation from Bloom Township High School, Hall aspired to become a brand manager at the Procter and Gamble Company.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Hall, Section B2014_027_001_003, TRT: 3:28:26 ?

Sharon Hall's father, Wallace Hall, was a member of the Toastmasters International, and raised his children according to the organization's values. Upon graduating from high school in 1974, Hall enrolled in the business program at the historically black Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia. She designed her own curriculum, which emphasized marketing and advertising and included several courses at the nearby Clark College. When Procter and Gamble Company sent a recruiter to the Atlanta University Center, Hall learned that they were only looking to recruit M.B.A. graduates students from Atlanta University. Nevertheless, she waited in the reception area and offered her resume to the recruiter, requesting an interview if anyone missed their appointment. Hall successfully secured a second interview at the company's headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she accepted a position in the paper division. She was one of fourteen black employees, and cofounded an affinity group for mentoring and support.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Hall, Section B2014_027_001_004, TRT: 4:28:53 ?

Sharon Hall joined the paper division of Procter and Gamble Company in 1978. As one of a few African American employees, she helped form an affinity group and was mentored by the senior black advertisers. Initially, Hall worked as an assistant on a test brand for toilet paper with lotion. In 1979, she was promoted to advertising sales trainee for Rely tampons, and then received another promotion to assistant brand manager for Pampers diapers. During this time, Hall developed an interest in management consulting, and decided to pursue further education. She secured a fellowship from the Consortium for Graduate Study in Management with the help of Marsha Bass Atwater, and enrolled at the University of Southern California Graduate School of Business Administration in Los Angeles, California. There, she founded a consulting club, through which

she secured an internship with Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. She joined the firm as a marketing practice associate after receiving her M.B.A. degree in 1982.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Hall, Section B2014_027_001_005, TRT: 5:29:15 ?

Sharon Hall left Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. in 1984, after enduring two years of pay discrimination on the basis of her gender and race. She was then recruited to join Avon Products Inc. as the manager of strategic planning for Asia and the Pacific. Her role later expanded to include Latin America. In this capacity, Hall travelled around the world to identify new market segments for Avon product lines. In 1987, Hall was promoted to director of operational planning for the United States. She went on to create the company's business development group, and hired John Ruff from Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. to develop an insect repellent for the Skin So Soft product line. In 1990, Hall was promoted to general manager of personal care products. She also worked with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, whose board chairman, Rick Goins, was the president of Avon Products, Inc. Additionally, Hall talks about the births of her sons, and remembers meeting their father, Kevin Morris, at Avon Products, Inc.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Hall, Section B2014_027_001_006, TRT: 6:28:57 ?

Sharon Hall joined the Black Professionals at Avon during her time at Avon Products Inc. She later headed the affinity group, and developed a performance appraisal strategy that focused on objective metrics to decrease discrimination. As the general manager of personal care products, Hall was recognized by CEO Andrea Jung for finding a solution to the insect repellent industry's claims against the Skin So Soft product line. Hall went on to serve as Jung's strategy consultant, but wanted to return to a management role, and left the company in 1994. That year, she became the senior vice president of corporate planning and marketing at La Petite Academy in Kansas City, Missouri. While there, Hall divorced her husband, and decided to return to Atlanta, Georgia. She sent her resume to the executive search firm Spencer Stuart, who recruited her to become a partner at their office in Atlanta. Hall trained at the firm's office in Chicago, Illinois, and went on to recruit Rosalind Brewer to join Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Hall, Section B2014_027_001_007, TRT: 7:16:53 ?

Sharon Hall was a partner the Spencer Stuart executive search firm. She talks about the firm's competitors, including Heidrick and Struggles International Inc. and Russell Reynolds Associates, Inc. She also shares her philosophy on business and religion. At this point in the interview, Hall describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community. She talks about her family, and reflects upon her legacy, life and how she would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Sharon Hall, Section B2014_027_001_008, TRT: 8:29:47 ?

Sharon Hall narrates her photographs.