

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paula Madison

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Madison, Paula
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paula Madison,
Dates:	November 19, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	5 Uncompressed MOV video files (2:30:57).
Abstract:	Television executive and journalist Paula Madison (1952 -) was named vice president and news director of WNBC in 1996 and named president and general manager of KNBC in 2000, making her the first African American woman to become a general manager of a network-owned station in a Top 5 market. Madison also serves as partner in Williams Group Holdings LLC, and as chairman and CEO of the Los Angeles Sparks. Madison was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 19, 2013, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_327
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Television executive and journalist Paula Williams Madison was born in Harlem, New York in 1952 to parents Elrick Williams and Nell Lowe Williams. She attended Cardinal Spellman High School in the Bronx where her favorite subjects were history and Latin. Initially, Madison wanted to become an educator and spent her summers teaching inner-city youth about African American history. After high school, she received a scholarship to Vassar College and graduated with her B.A. degree in 1974.

Madison then moved to Syracuse, New York where she became a graduate student at Syracuse University Newhouse School of Public Communications, and was hired as a reporter at the "Syracuse Herald Journal". Her early career was spent as a newspaper reporter in New York and Texas, and as a television news manager and executive in Dallas, Tulsa and Houston. Madison then returned to New York City as assistant news director at NBC4, and became the station's vice president and news director in March of 1996. Shortly after, she took on a second role as senior vice president of diversity for NBC. In 2000, Madison was promoted to president and general manager of KNBC, making her the first African American woman to become a general manager of a top news network. She then stepped down from the diversity leadership role and, when NBC purchased Telemundo, a Spanish-language network, Madison also assumed responsibility for the newly acquired Telemundo stations in Los Angeles.

In 2007, Madison was appointed executive vice president and chief diversity officer of NBC Universal. The parent company, GE, named her a company officer and vice president. Madison's family owns Williams Group Holdings LLC, which has significant investments in media (The Africa Channel), a sports franchise (the WNBA's Los Angeles Sparks), and various real estate, consumer, financial and trading businesses. In addition to being named chairman and CEO of the Los Angeles Sparks, she also became a member of the WNBA Board of Governors.

Madison is a board member of Greater Los Angeles United Way, a past Chairman of the California Science Center Foundation, Vice Chair of National Medical Fellowships, the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, Cardinal Spellman High School, and chair of The Nell Williams Family Foundation. In 2013, Mayor Eric Garcetti appointed her a commissioner of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Madison has received many awards including the Ida B. Wells award from the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) in 1998, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations in 1999, and the First Amendment Service Award from the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation in 2000. In 2005, Madison was named one of the "75 Most Powerful African Americans in Corporate America" by "Black Enterprise" magazine and was included in the "Hollywood Reporter's" "Power 100." She received the NABJ Legacy Award in 2010, was named to "Ebony" magazine's 2013 Power 100 List, and also received the Pinnacle Award from the Houston Association of Black Journalists.

Madison and her husband, Roosevelt Madison, live in Los Angeles, California.

Paula Williams Madison was interviewed by "The HistoryMakers" on November 19, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paula Madison was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 19, 2013, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 5 Uncompressed MOV video files. Television executive and journalist Paula Madison (1952 -) was named vice president and news director of WNBC in 1996 and named president and general manager of KNBC in 2000, making her the first African American woman to become a general manager of a network-owned station in a Top 5 market. Madison also serves as partner in Williams Group Holdings LLC, and as chairman and CEO of the Los Angeles Sparks.

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:

Madison, Paula

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews.

Paula Madison--Interviews.

African American women journalists--Interviews.

African American women executives--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Paula Madison, November 19, 2013. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 7/2/2015 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, November 19, 2013

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Madison, Section A2013_327_001_001,
TRT: 1:31:57 2013/11/19

Paula Madison, investor and current chairman and CEO of the Los Angeles Sparks WNBA team, describes her maternal family background. Originally from the Xiang Gang province of China, Madison's maternal grandfather opened a series of grocery stores after immigrating to Jamaica in 1905. Madison's grandfather met a Jamaican woman who gave birth to her mother, Nell Williams, in 1918 in Jamaica, West Indies. An avid researcher, Madison dedicated years of time and energy researching and exploring her Chinese ancestry both in the United States and in China. Madison describes traveling to the museum dedicated to her ancestors, Hakka tribespeople, in her ancestral Chinese village in the Kwong Dong Province. Madison also shares detailed knowledge of the structure of Chinese and Jamaican class hierarchies in twentieth century Jamaica.

Grandfathers--Emigration and immigration--Jamaica.
Grandmothers--Jamaica.
Genealogy--China.
Social classes.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Madison, Section A2013_327_001_002,

TRT: 2:28:19 2013/11/19

Paula Madison describes how former Jamaican prime minister Michael Manley's marriage to Beverly Manley influenced her pride in her race. Madison also describes the Jamaican Maroons, from whom she believes her paternal grandfather descended, and compares and contrasts Maroon culture with Rastafarian religion. Madison then describes her parents and their family background. Madison's father, Elrick Williams, was born August 1917 in Kingston, Jamaica to Jamaican parents. After working for his father's usery business, Williams studied to become a tool and die maker and immigrated to the United States in the 1940s to marry Madison's mother, Nell Williams. Nell Williams was born November 1918 in Jamaica, West Indies to a Chinese father and a Jamaican mother. A seamstress at Kingston's Alpha School for Girls, Williams immigrated from Jamaica to the United States in the 1940s and became a U.S. citizen in 1955.

Genealogy.

Maroons--Jamaica.

Manley, Michael, 1924-1997.

Manley, Beverly.

African American parents--Emigration and immigration.

Rastafari movement.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Madison, Section A2013_327_001_003,
TRT: 3:30:55 2013/11/19

Paula Madison shares the story of her parents' marriage. Madison's paternal grandmother introduced Elrick and Nell Williams to one another in Kingston, Jamaica, and the two remained a couple until Nell Williams, a seamstress, immigrated to the United States around 1945 in search of a better life. A skilled tool and die maker, Elrick Williams was hired as a mechanic on a ship bound to New York, where he later arrived in search of Nell Williams, and the two were married months later. Madison describes the effects of her parents' separation and father's deportation to Jamaica in 1955. Madison also describes growing up between homes in Harlem and Queens, New York City, New York, after her father returned to the United States in the late 1950s. Madison describes her parents' personalities, and their various philosophical views. She also talks about how her Jamaican heritage influenced her drive to build wealth, as well as a few childhood memories.

African American parents--Emigration and immigration.

Childhood--New York (State)--New York.

Deportation.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Madison, Section A2013_327_001_004,
TRT: 4:29:36 2013/11/19

Paula Madison describes traveling to Kingston, Jamaica with her father Elrick Williams in 1973 during her junior or senior year at Vassar College. This trip, in particular, had a profound impact on her outlook towards her Jamaican culture. Madison also shares early

childhood memories related to growing up in Harlem, New York City, New York. She also talks about how her daughter influenced her natural hairstyle. Madison describes her brother Elrick Mortimer Williams, Jr., who briefly attended Harvard Business School and built a multimillion dollar computer trading business. Madison also talks about her brother Howard Courtney Williams, who struggled with substance abuse until his parents' deaths in 2006.

Vassar College.

African American families--New York (State)--New York.

Harvard Business School.

African American businesspeople.

Travel--Kingston (Jamaica).

Childhood--New York (State)--New York--Harlem.

Substance abuse.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula Madison, Section A2013_327_001_005,
TRT: 5:30:10 2013/11/19

Paula Madison describes her schooling experiences in New York City, New York and learning how to read at an early age. Madison's mother, Nell Williams, went out of her way to ensure that her children received a high quality, unbiased education. Madison describes attending a Catholic grammar school, which played a major role in shaping her leadership abilities. Madison also describes confronting class and race issues during high school, the 1965 assassination of Malcolm X, and credits her mother's consumption of media coverage during the 1960s with shaping her career path towards journalism.

African Americans--Education (Elementary)--New York (State)--New York.

X, Malcolm, 1925-1965--Assassination.

African American mothers.

Race and society.