

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ramona Edelin

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Edelin, Ramona Hoage, 1945-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ramona Edelin,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 14, 2003
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2003
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:33:00).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Nonprofit chief executive Ramona Edelin (1945 - ) is the former CEO of the National Urban Coalition. Edelin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 14, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2003_153
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Ramona Edelin was born in Los Angeles, California, on September 4, 1945. At an early age, Edelin's family relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, where she attended elementary school. Edelin went on to Carbondale, Illinois, for some high school; she graduated from Stockbridge High School in Massachusetts in 1963. Following graduation, Edelin attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, earning her B.A. degree in 1967, and then studied at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England, for her M.A. degree, completing the program in 1969. Edelin later resumed her education, completing her Ph.D. degree at Boston University in 1981.

After earning her master's degree, Edelin became the founder and chair of the Department of African American Studies at Northeastern University. In 1977, Edelin joined the National Urban Coalition, where she eventually rose to the positions of president and CEO. Under Edelin's guidance, the NUC initiated the Say Yes to a Youngster's Future program, which provided math, science, and technology assistance to youth and teachers of color in urban settings. Under the National Science Foundation's Urban Systemic Initiative, this program was brought to more than two hundred schools nationwide, and was eventually partnered with the Laboratory for Student Success within the United States Department of Education. Edelin also created the M. Carl Holman Leadership Development Institute and the Executive Leadership Program, bringing minorities into leadership development opportunities. In 1998, President Bill Clinton appointed Edelin to the Presidential Board on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; she also accompanied the president on his trip to South Africa that same year. Edelin went on to serve as treasurer of the Black Leadership Forum, which she co-founded.

Edelin served on a wide array of committees and boards of directors, having chaired the District of Columbia Educational Goals 2000 Panel; sitting on the board of the Federal Advisory Committee for the Black Community Crusade for Children; and chairing the board of the D.C. Community Humanities Council. A resident of Washington, D.C., Edelin was recognized by *Ebony* as one of the 100 Most Influential Black Americans; earned the Southern Christian Leadership Award for Progressive Leadership; and received the IBM Community Executive Program Award.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ramona Edelin was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on July 14, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit chief executive Ramona Edelin (1945 - ) is the former CEO of the National Urban Coalition.

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# 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®.

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# 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.

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# Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

## Persons:

Edelin, Ramona Hoage, 1945-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Edelin, Ramona Hoage, 1945---Interviews

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# Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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National Urban Coalition (U.S.)

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## Occupations:

Nonprofit Chief Executive

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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## 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 Ramona Edelin, July 14, 2003. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Ramona Edelin, Section A2003\_153\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:20 ?  
Ramona Edelin provides commentary to the photographs documenting her life. She then talks about her parents' backgrounds and family histories.

Video Oral History Interview with Ramona Edelin, Section A2003\_153\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:30 ?  
Ramona Edelin talks about her childhood and discusses values instilled in her and memories of Orangeburg, South Carolina. She remembers her grandparents and talks about their personalities and lessons she learned from them. Next, she

speaks about her relationship with her mother. Ramona Edelin shares stories surrounding her birth and the untimely death of her father. She then recalls her religious upbringing and explains the influence church had on her. Edelin talks about her move from South Carolina to Atlanta and recalls her educational experiences there.

Video Oral History Interview with Ramona Edelin, Section A2003\_153\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:45 ?

Ramona Edelin talks about the origin of her name and then discusses the concept of lab schools. She recalls being one of the very few black students and describes how she dealt with being a minority during her childhood. Edelin speaks about racism she faced and her attempts to fit in at school in Carbondale, Illinois. Next, she discusses her move to Massachusetts and describes her high school experiences there, including her exposure to international affairs.

Video Oral History Interview with Ramona Edelin, Section A2003\_153\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Ramona Edelin explains how she decided to attend Fisk University. Then, she recalls experiences there and talks about professors who influenced her along the way. Edelin tells about her interest in W.E.B. DuBois, the topic of her studies at Fisk. Next, she details juggling marriage, motherhood and studying for her master's degree. She then talks about working for Dr. Martin Luther King while a college student and the gratification she received from her efforts. Next, she mentions others involved with Dr. King at that time. Ramona Edelin recalls stories of the terrible struggles black soldiers endured during the Vietnam War.

Video Oral History Interview with Ramona Edelin, Section A2003\_153\_001\_005, TRT: 0:31:05 ?

Ramona Edelin recalls the writers workshop at Fisk University where she met and worked with John Oliver Killens. She then describes a lawsuit against her husband and how that affected her life and career. Edelin talks about the racist atmosphere in Boston during the 1970s and tells about her move from Boston to Washington, D.C. She then recalls her meeting with M. Carl Holman and her work with the National Urban Coalition. Edelin describes the purpose of the National Urban Coalition and its history. After speaking about the path her career has taken she reflects on the deaths of her mother and grandfather. Ramona Edelin talks about her activities with black leaders in Washington, D.C.

Video Oral History Interview with Ramona Edelin, Section A2003\_153\_001\_006, TRT: 0:31:20 ?

Ramona Edelin discusses the National Urban Coalition and her tenure there as successor to NUC's founder and President M. Carl Holman. She then talks about her career path and details her focus on math and science education for African American children during the 1990s. Edelin talks about how she became involved with the Congressional Black Caucus and her appointment to run the CBC Foundation. She then details the purpose and activities of the foundation and her career move following her departure from CBCF in 2002. Lastly, Edelin talks about her personal involvement with coining the term 'African American'.

Video Oral History Interview with Ramona Edelin, Section A2003\_153\_001\_007, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Ramona Edelin talks about the cultural identity of African Americans and shares her thoughts about the outcome of integration. Edelin then discusses the recent Republican administrations in Washington and details their damaging effects on the African American community. She then talks about the importance of HBCUs and her long friendship with activist Stokely Carmichael. Ramona Edelin gives her views on single parenting and the importance of an extended family network. Lastly, she talks about what makes African Americans unique and details her family's long legacy in the Delta Sigma Theta sorority.