

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Brenda Singletary

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Singletary, Brenda, 1954-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Singletary,
Dates:	January 16, 2007 and January 17, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:17:50).
Abstract:	Mixed media artist Brenda Singletary (1954 -) was an artist whose original pieces are done in oil, enamel, acrylic, gold leaf, and pastels; they range from figurative and abstract to floral and landscapes. Singletary's artistic career was centered on projects to help support community non-profits. Singletary was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 16, 2007 and January 17, 2007, in Loganville, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_011
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Football player Brian Dawkins was born on October 13, 1973 in Jacksonville, Florida to Patricia Dawkins and Ralph Dawkins. After graduating from William M. Raines High School in Jacksonville, Florida, he attended Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, where he played on the football and basketball teams.

Widely regarded as one of the greatest safeties of all time, Dawkins was a three-year starter at Clemson University under head coaches Ken Hatfield and Tommy West, and finished his college career with 247 tackles and 11 interceptions. He was then selected by the Philadelphia Eagles in the 2nd round of the 1996 NFL Draft as the 61st overall pick, where he played for 13 seasons under head coaches Ray Rhodes and Andy Reid, including in Super Bowl XXXIX, and was viewed as the leader of the Eagles' defense. Following his time with the Eagles, Dawkins signed with the Denver Broncos in 2009, where he played for three seasons under head coaches Josh McDaniels, Eric Studesville, and John Fox before retiring from the NFL. Dawkins finished his professional football career with 1,147 tackles, 26 sacks, 36 forced fumbles, 19 fumble recoveries, 37 interceptions, and 4 touchdowns.

In 2012, Dawkins was hired as an NFL studio analyst by ESPN, and from 2016 to 2018 he worked as the executive of football operations for player development for the Philadelphia Eagles under head coach Doug Pederson. The Eagles won Super Bowl LII under his watch.

Dawkins was named a member of the Pro Football Writers Association 1996 All-Rookie Team and to nine Pro Bowls and five All-Pro first-teams during his career. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2018 and the Clemson University Athletic Hall of Fame in 2009. He is also a member of the Philadelphia Eagles Hall of Fame, the Philadelphia Eagles 75th Anniversary Team, and the NFL 2000s All-Decade Team. The Philadelphia Eagles retired his number 20 in 2012.

Dawkins and his wife, Connie Kerrin, live in Denver, Colorado. They have four children, Brian Dawkins Jr.,

Brionni Dawkins, Chonni Dawkins, and Cionni Dawkins.

Brian Dawkins was interviewed by NFL Films on August 13, 2018 and August 22, 2018.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Brenda Singletary was conducted by Denise Gines on January 16, 2007 and January 17, 2007, in Loganville, Georgia, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Mixed media artist Brenda Singletary (1954 -) was an artist whose original pieces are done in oil, enamel, acrylic, gold leaf, and pastels; they range from figurative and abstract to floral and landscapes. Singletary's artistic career was centered on projects to help support community non-profits.

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:

Singletary, Brenda, 1954-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Singletary, Brenda, 1954- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Mixed Media Artist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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 Brenda Singletary, January 16, 2007 and January 17, 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 Brenda Singletary, Section A2007_011_001_001, TRT: 0:28:30
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Brenda Singletary was born on May 23, 1954 in Detroit, Michigan to Mattie

Hicks Singletary and James Singletary, who were both born in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Her maternal great-grandmother left Clarksdale for Chicago, Illinois, where she lived until her death at 113 years old, while Singletary's maternal grandparents, Oliver Hicks and Dereanzy Berry Hicks, remained in Clarksdale, where her grandfather was a Christian Methodist Episcopal preacher. Singletary's paternal grandparents died when her father was young, and he went on to serve in the U.S. military during World War II. After returning to Mississippi to work in his brother's auto garage, he married Singletary's mother, and moved to Detroit, Michigan. There, Singletary attended Hillger Elementary School and Barbour Junior High School, and studied art and violin. Singletary's family was active at Saunders Memorial A.M.E. Church, where her father sang in the choir. While they were not wealthy, the family had large Christmas celebrations.

Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Singletary, Section A2007_011_001_002, TRT: 0:29:00
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Brenda Singletary grew up listening to Motown, classical and gospel music at home in Detroit. Her father brought the men's choir to their home to listen to records of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speeches, and her aunts told her about attending the March on Washington. Singletary herself witnessed riots in Detroit during years of the Civil Rights Movement. At Barbour Junior High School, Singletary was quiet and withdrawn, but eager to attend Charles F. Kettering Senior High School, where her music teacher, Harry G. Shuman, helped her participate in the Detroit Youth Symphony. Although her parents encouraged her to teach, Singletary was more interested in the arts. She intended to pursue music as a career, but also continued to study visual art, and received an award after her art teacher entered her work into a citywide contest. Upon graduation in 1971, she was recruited to Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan by administrator George Jackson, but was eventually disappointed by its art program.

Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Singletary, Section A2007_011_001_003, TRT: 0:30:10
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Brenda Singletary left Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, where she was unhappy with the art program, which focused on abstract subjects. Looking to attend a historically black college, Singletary chose Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia. Although she did not hear back after submitting her application, she travelled to the school. The campus was closed due to an ice storm, but when it reopened, Singletary convinced President Robert Threatt to allow her to enroll. Singletary enjoyed the art program at Morris Brown College, where she worked with pastels and ceramics. After three years, Singletary suddenly felt uncomfortable on campus; and, although unsure why she felt that way, left the school. She accepted a part time position at WSB-TV, where she met reporter Monica Pearson, and later began a business program at Morehouse College while completing an internship at WXIA-TV. There, she worked in the community affairs department, and with reporters Benjamin Perry and Maynard Eaton.

Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Singletary, Section A2007_011_001_004, TRT: 0:28:30
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Brenda Singletary quit her part time position at WSB-TV in Atlanta, Georgia, after the station manager at WXIA-TV, where she was an intern, discovered that she was working for their competition. Soon after, she became the community affairs director of WTVC-TV in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where she produced several weekly programs, and worked with local nonprofit organizations. She

also interviewed Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, who walked out after Singletary questioned him about the PUSH Excel high school program. After one year, Singletary returned to Atlanta, where she worked as a private investigator and an organ tuner while applying to broadcasting positions. In 1984, she received an offer to become the news and public affairs director at WGCL-TVb and, although reluctant to work in news, accepted it. After one year, Singletary quit to focus on her art, designing bags and jewelry to earn money, while also painting. After several rejections, Singletary sold her artwork to the Tritt Gallery.

Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Singletary, Section A2007_011_001_005, TRT: 0:29:10
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Brenda Singletary sold her artwork to Bill Tritt's gallery in Decatur, Georgia after he told her what colors would sell to interior designers. With this knowledge, Singletary began selling paintings outright to other retail galleries, rather than leaving pieces at the galleries for free with an agreement to be paid after they sold to customers. She developed a national circuit, where she sold her artwork from her car, and learned to tailor her pieces to the regional markets. As female artists were often dismissed as amateurs, Singletary called herself the representative of the artist B. Singletary. One year, she hosted seminars at her home, where she offered business advice to upcoming Atlanta artists, including Zelda Grant and Selma Glass. Another year, she held a show at the Woodruff Art Center for the National Black Arts Festival. Soon after, Singletary began selling artwork in California, and partnered with nonprofit organizations, through which she gained press coverage, and contributed to the community.

Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Singletary, Section A2007_011_002_006, TRT: 0:28:50
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Brenda Singletary sold her unwanted artwork to friends who wanted to keep Singletary from burning it. This experience inspired her to hold an art auction for her fellow members of 100 Black Women, and she donated the proceeds. The event attracted the attention of the press, and Singletary began hosting art burning fundraisers annually, in collaboration with nonprofit organizations like the United Negro College Fund, the NAACP, and 100 Black Men. In 1997, Singletary was recruited by CNN director Gail Evans to serve as a judge for the White House Fellows program, and was commissioned to paint a portrait of the fellows to hang in the White House. In 2001, Singletary was invited to speak to the White House Fellows about her experiences as an African American artist. Singletary shares her advice for young artists, as well as her concern for the lack of art education in predominantly African American schools. She also reflects upon her life, and her admiration of artists Sam Gilliam and Thornton Dial.

Video Oral History Interview with Brenda Singletary, Section A2007_011_002_007, TRT: 0:23:40
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Brenda Singletary describes her appreciation of the artwork of John-Michel Basquiat. She shares advice for aspiring art collectors, recommending that they start with local artists. She also explains how to identify works of art that will appreciate in value, and the costs of various kinds of art reproductions. Singletary concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.