

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Charlestine Fairley

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## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Repository:</b>           | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616<br>info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com   |
| <b>Creator:</b>              | Fairley, Charlestine, 1938-   |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley,   |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | April 25, 2007  |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2007  |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:25:40).   |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Academic administrator Charlestine Fairley (1938 - ) dedicated her career to improving education, substance abuse prevention, and counseling services to the disadvantaged. Fairley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 25, 2007, in Edgewater, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2007_162   |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.   |

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Academic administrator and social activist Charlestine Romelle Dawson Hickson Fairley was born on July 24, 1938 in Greenville, Mississippi to Ida Harris Dawson and Kemp Dawson. She was educated in Gulfport, Mississippi, where she graduated from 33rd Avenue High School in 1956. She briefly attended Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi before transferring to Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. During a summer break she met William F. Hickson, Jr. a dental student at Meharry Medical College. After a year of courtship, Fairley dropped out of college to move to Nashville, Tennessee to marry Hickson. After the birth of the couple's three children--Nina, Franklin, and Oneal-- Fairley returned to college, completing her B.A. degree in sociology at Delaware State College in 1963. Following her graduation, Fairley worked for the Burlington County, New Jersey Welfare Department as a case worker. Fairley returned to school, earning her M.Ed. degree in counseling from South Carolina State College in 1969 and her Ph.D. degree in education from the University of South Carolina in 1990.

Fairley taught and worked as a special services counselor at Claflin College from 1968 to 1973, when she became coordinator of its Upward Bound and Special Services program. Fairley then directed Claflin's Special Programs for Disadvantaged Students until leaving in 1986 to direct the Upward Bound program at the University of South Carolina. Because Fairley shared the same disadvantaged background as her students, she was especially effective in connecting with them. Her programmatic innovations with Upward Bound's TRIO Achievers were incorporated into the program at the national level. Fairley married Richard L. Fairley in 1989, the same year that she was appointed as a consultant for the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). Fairley then shifted her career focus to the administration of government substance abuse prevention services, joining the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1990 as a program officer in the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention. Two years later, Fairley and her husband moved to Annapolis, Maryland, where she directed Prevention Services for the Anne Arundel County Department of Health until 1997. She coordinated the Anne Arundel County Executive's Criminal Justice Drug Intervention Program from 1998 to 1999. She worked concurrently as a trainer for Maryland's Office of Education and Training for Addiction Services.

During this time, she was also an adjunct professor at Nova University and Bowie State University's College of Business, and part-time coordinator of the Annapolis campus of Sojourner-Douglass College. Fairley has served as the full-time director of the Sojourner-Douglass College, Annapolis Campus since 1993.

Fairley is a life member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the National Council of Negro Women, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the American Association of University Women. She is also a member of The Links, Inc., Annapolis Chapter and the 21st Century Club of Annapolis. Fairley belongs to the First Presbyterian Church of Annapolis.

Charlestine Fairley was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 25, 2007.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Charlestine Fairley was conducted by Denise Gines on April 25, 2007, in Edgewater, Maryland, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator Charlestine Fairley (1938 - ) dedicated her career to improving education, substance abuse prevention, and counseling services to the disadvantaged.

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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:

Fairley, Charlestine, 1938-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Fairley, Charlestine, 1938- --Interviews

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African American educators—Interviews

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African American college administrators—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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## Occupations:

Academic Administrator

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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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 Charlestine Fairley, April 25, 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).

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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 Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007\_162\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:00  
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Charlestine Fairley was born on July 24, 1938 in Greeneville, Mississippi to Ida Harris Blake and Kemp Dawson, Jr. Her paternal great-grandfather was a former slave of Native American ancestry. Fairley's maternal great-grandmother, Ida Brooks, was a midwife who owned land in Greeneville. Originally from Louisiana, Fairley's maternal grandmother, Emma Darris Harris, migrated to Greeneville, where she married Fairley's maternal grandfather, Len Harris. Fairley's father was born in Sunflower County, Mississippi to sharecroppers Rosie Farmer Dawson and Kemp Dawson, Sr. He moved to Greeneville at a young age, where he met and married her mother, and worked as a mechanic. Fairley was raised by her paternal grandparents in Indianola, Mississippi, while her parents worked in the shipyards in Seattle, Washington. After separating, Fairley's mother moved to Chicago, Illinois while her father remained on the West Coast, where he later owned his own car service station and repair shop.

African American families--Mississippi.  
Divorce.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007\_162\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:50  
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Charlestine Fairley moved with her paternal grandparents, Rosie Farmer Dawson and Kemp Dawson, Sr., to a segregated community in Gulfport, Mississippi when she was four years old. There, her paternal grandmother sometimes worked as a pastry chef, and her paternal grandfather was employed as a laborer and electrician's assistant. She was an active member of the Little Rock Baptist Church in Gulfport, where she was encouraged to become a teacher. She attended the segregated Gaston Point Elementary School until the third grade when she was bused to 33rd Avenue High School. There, she recited Margaret Walker's poem, 'For My People' for an Omega Psi Phi Fraternity's talent competition, which she won. She was motivated to pursue a college education by her principal, W.F. Calbert, who organized visits to nearby college campuses. Upon graduating in 1956, Fairley received a scholarship to attend Tougaloo College; and after one year, transferred to Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

African Americans--Mississippi--Gulfport.  
African American Baptists.  
African American universities and colleges--United States.  
African American college students.  
African American churches.  
African Americans--Social life and customs.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007\_162\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:10  
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Charlestine Fairley attended Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she joined Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. During her summer break, Fairley

visited Chicago, Illinois, where she met her first husband, William F. Hickson, Jr., who was a dental student at Meharry Medical College. She left school and moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where they married and had three children. They later moved to Dover, Delaware, where Fairley finished her sociology degree at Delaware State College in 1963. She then relocated to New Jersey, and served as a medical caseworker for the Burlington County welfare department, where she focused on elderly patient care. After two years, Fairley moved to Orangeburg, South Carolina, where she taught sociology at Claflin University. She obtained her master's degree in counseling education from South Carolina State College in 1969, and returned to Claflin University, where she was a counselor for the TRiO programs, and admired her supervisor, Alethia S. Worthy.

African American college students.

African American children--Social conditions--Mississippi.

Segregation--Mississippi.

Race relations--Mississippi--20th century.

Segregation--Southern States.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007\_162\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:50  
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Charlestine Fairley counselled first generation college students through the Special Services for Disadvantaged Students program at Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina; and after four years, was promoted to coordinator for all of the university's federal TRiO programs. Fairley later served as the director of the programs, and founded the TRiO Achievers Luncheon. In 1986, Fairley directed the University of South Carolina's Special Services for Disadvantaged Students program. She also presided over the Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel conference, where she met her second husband, educator Richard Fairley. In 1990, she received her Ph.D. degree in education from the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina, and moved to Washington, D.C., where she became a program officer for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' substance abuse prevention program. In 1992, she oversaw substance abuse prevention program in Anne Arundel County.

Upward Bound Program (U.S.)--South Carolina.

Claflin College (Orangeburg, S.C.).

African American universities and colleges--United States.

African Americans--Marriage.

African Americans--Divorce.

Counseling in higher education.

Video Oral History Interview with Charlestine Fairley, Section A2007\_162\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:50  
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Charlestine Fairley was hired by educator Charles W. Simmons in 1993 to serve as director of Sojourner-Douglass College, a private college in Edgewater, Maryland. She began with only ten students, and often held classes in her own home. By 1999, the institution had grown to two hundred students. To accommodate the larger student body, they purchased land in Annapolis, Maryland to build a school, but encountered a property owner in the majority white South River Colony community who attempted to deter them with a lawsuit. In 2004, the building was completed, and the school received a donation of forty acres of farm land from philanthropist Harrell Spruill. During this time,

Fairley and her second husband, Richard Fairley, founded the CRF and Associates, Inc., an education consultancy firm. Fairley reflects upon her trip to Africa, her family, how she would like to be remembered, and shares her advice for future generations.

African Americans--Race identity.

Sojourner-Douglass College.

African American universities and colleges--United States.

African American social life and customs.

African Americans--Africa.