

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Tanya-Monique Kersey

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Kersey, Tanya-Monique
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Tanya-Monique Kersey,
Dates:	July 8, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:20:30).
Abstract:	Magazine editor and magazine publishing chief executive Tanya-Monique Kersey (1961 -) was the founder and executive director of the Hollywood Black Film Festival in addition to being both publisher and editor-in-chief of Black Talent News. Kersey was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 8, 2007, in Beverly Hills, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_198
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Magazine editor and magazine publishing chief executive Tanya-Monique Kersey was born on March 22, 1961 in New York City, New York to Cynthia and Al Smith Kersey. She earned her B.A. degree in political science and sociology from Douglass College at Rutgers University in 1983. Kersey began her entertainment career working as a model. She then transitioned into acting, performing in commercials, voiceovers and industrial films.

Kersey appeared on several soap operas such as, *All My Children*, *Search for Tomorrow* and *The Guiding Light*. In 1990, Kersey published the *Black State of the Arts: A Guide to Developing a Successful Career as a Black Performing Artist*. This book became a proverbial how to manual for African Americans who are launching a career in the industry. In 1994, she established the magazine *Black Talent News* that focused on news from film, television, theatre and new media industries. After two years of publication *Black Talent News* became the first African American trade magazine to be accredited by the Motion Picture Association of America and the Television Critics' Association. In 1997, Kersey participated in the annual Infotainment Conference. In 1999, *Black Talent News* launched its website www.blacktalentnews.com, which shares information about the industry via the internet. That same year, Kersey began the Hollywood Black Film Festival, a six day celebration of African American cinema. In 2002, Kersey authored and compiled *The Black Film Report* and the *Black Talent News Resource Directory*. Kersey is also a frequent contributor and co-host on the *Samm Brown's for the Record* radio, show delivering the Urban Entertainment Report on RPFK radio in Los Angeles, California. Kersey is the executive producer of the entertainment newsmagazine show, *Inside Urban Hollywood with Tanya Kersey*.

In 2002 Kersey was named a "Living History Maker" by *Turning Point Magazine*. In this same year, she was also named one of Hollywood's Urban Movers and Shakers by *Daily Variety* for her work as publisher and editor-in-chief of *Black Talent News*, as well as for being the founder and executive director of the Hollywood Black Film Festival. Kersey serves on the marketing advisory board of the Independent Feature Project/West and the Pan African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou. She is also a member of the Media Industry Advisory

Board at West Los Angeles College.

Tanya- Monique Kersey was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 8, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Tanya-Monique Kersey was conducted by Ron Brewington on July 8, 2007, in Beverly Hills, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Magazine editor and magazine publishing chief executive Tanya-Monique Kersey (1961 -) was the founder and executive director of the Hollywood Black Film Festival in addition to being both publisher and editor-in-chief of Black Talent News.

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:

Kersey, Tanya-Monique

Brewington, Ron (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Kersey, Tanya-Monique--Interviews

African American entertainers.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Magazine Editor

Magazine Publishing Chief Executive

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 Tanya-Monique Kersey, July 8, 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 Tanya-Monique Kersey, Section A2007_198_001_001, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Tanya-Monique Kersey was born on March 22, 1961 in New York City to Cynthia Wallace Kersey and Al Kersey. Her maternal grandfather, Franz C. Wallace, Sr., originated in Jamaica, and became a track star, competing against Jesse Owens in the Olympic trials. Her maternal grandmother, Gwendolyn Miller Fieulleateau, was Panamanian; and her brother, Kersey's great uncle Walter A. Miller, cofounded the Carver Federal Savings and Loan Association. Kersey's mother was born in New York City, and studied at Hunter College to become a public schoolteacher. Kersey and her sister, Lisa Kersey, grew up in the Riverton Houses in New York City's Harlem community, where her family often hosted social gatherings for their neighbors, including producer Suzanne de Passe. Kersey attended P.S. 41 Greenwich Village School, while her sister attended the Ethical Culture Fieldston School. Kersey also describes her early memories of her mother, who was diagnosed with gastric cancer in 2003, and passed away in 2005.

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

New York (N.Y.)--Social life and customs.

Acculturation--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Tanya-Monique Kersey, Section A2007_198_001_002, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Tanya-Monique Kersey's father, Al Kersey, was born in 1932 in Warrenton, North Carolina to Peggy Epps and Roosevelt Danles, who were teenagers at the time. Kersey's father lived with his maternal relatives in North Carolina, while his mother worked as a barmaid in New York City, and married John Epps. Later, Kersey's father served in the U.S. Navy, and then moved to New York City, where he met Kersey's mother, Cynthia Wallace Kersey. He went on to work as the chief investigator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Chairman Clarence Thomas. When Kersey was twelve years old, her family moved to Haworth, New Jersey, a predominantly white suburb, where the residents included saxophonist Stanley Turrentine, musician Rudolph Isley and model Brooke Shields. Kersey attended the Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest, where she was a varsity cheerleader and class president. She graduated one year early, and enrolled at the Douglass Residential College in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

African American fathers--New Jersey--Haworth.

African Americans--Military service.

African American grandparents.

African American families.

Video Oral History Interview with Tanya-Monique Kersey, Section A2007_198_001_003, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Tanya-Monique Kersey began her education at New York City's St. Benedict School, and then attended P.S. 41 Greenwich Village School. From the age of five years old, she studied dance at Arthur Mitchell's Dance Theatre of Harlem, and under Marion Facey at Carnegie Hall. While attending the Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest in New Jersey, she entered Hal Jackson's Talented Teens International pageant, and enrolled in the Barbizon Modeling and Acting School. After completing high school, Kersey studied political science and sociology at Douglass Residential College in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where she struggled with her racial identity after growing up in a

majority white town. Upon graduation, she returned to New York City, where she began acting in commercials, and joined the Screen Actors Guild. She worked as a stand-in on 'The Cosby Show,' where she met Samuel L. Jackson and Malcolm-Jamal Warner. She also appeared on soap operas like 'All My Children,' and 'Another World' with Jackee Harry.

Father-daughter relationship.

Pocono Mountains (Pa.)--Description and travel.

Dance Theatre of Harlem.

Racism in education--New Jersey--Demarest.

African American college students--Race identity.

African American entertainers.

Video Oral History Interview with Tanya-Monique Kersey, Section A2007_198_001_004, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Tanya-Monique Kersey self-published her book, 'Black State of the Arts,' in 1990. The book was inspired by her experiences as an actress, and sold well in major bookstores, leading to its acquisition by a publishing company, which then released a second edition. Kersey later worked under media executive Keith Clinkscales at Vibe magazine, until leaving to complete a publishing program at Stanford University. In 1994, she founded the Black Talent News, a newsletter about the black film industry, which grew into a trade magazine that ran in print for seven years. She also published the 'Urban Hollywood Resource Directory,' which provided trade information about black production companies. In 1997, Kersey held the first Infotainment Conference on acting at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, which she later developed into the Hollywood Black Film Festival. Kersey talks about her family, including her daughters, Monique Kersey-Love and Brittany Kersey-Love; and husband, Ronald Henley.

African American women--Social life and customs.

African Americans in the performing arts.

African American film festivals.

African American entertainers.

Performing arts--Vocational guidance.

African American entertainers--Periodicals.

Video Oral History Interview with Tanya-Monique Kersey, Section A2007_198_001_005, TRT: 0:26:00 ?

Tanya-Monique Kersey held the first Hollywood Black Film Festival in 1999, at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, California. The festival worked to build connections between black filmmakers and production companies, including Lions Gate Entertainment, Inc., Focus Features LLC, Universal Pictures and Paramount Pictures Corporation. The festival also featured panel discussions with media executives like Charles D. King from the William Morris Agency. At the time of the interview, the Hollywood Black Film Festival showcased 125 films, which were chosen from hundreds of submissions by the festival's director of programming, Jacqueline Blaylock. In addition, Kersey talks about attending the Faithful Central Bible Church, which was pastored by Kenneth C. Ulmer in Inglewood, California. She reflects upon the future of the black film industry, and her advice for aspiring entertainers. Kersey concludes the interview by describing how she would like to be remembered, and narrating her photographs.

African American film festivals.

African American churches.

Faithful Central Bible Church.

African Americans in the motion pictures industry--California--Los Angeles.