

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Irma Daniels

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Daniels, Irma, 1949-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Irma Daniels,
Dates:	November 26, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:24:45).
Abstract:	High school health teacher Irma Daniels (1949 -) taught in Milwaukee Public Schools and Lady Pitts School Age Parent Center. Daniels was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 26, 2007, in Mequon, Wisconsin. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_329
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator Irma Daniels was born Irma Dean Hall on April 21, 1949 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Levester Powell Hall and Daisy Lee Hortman Hall. Raised in the Brewer's Hill section of Milwaukee, Daniels' family were members of the Bethesda Church of God in Christ. She attended Palmer Elementary School, Twelfth Street School, Robert Fulton Junior High School and graduated as an honor student from North Division High School in 1966. Attending Oshkosh State University, Daniels graduated in 1971 with her B.S. degree in education.

After teaching for a year in Fondulac, Wisconsin, Daniels married John W. Daniels, Jr. in 1972 and accompanied him to Boston, Massachusetts. There, she taught health and coached a championship girls basketball team. In 1974, Daniels returned to Milwaukee and worked in City Hall for a short time. In 1975, she was hired by Milwaukee Public Schools where she taught elementary and middle school. In 1978, Daniels joined Lady Pitts School Age Parent Center which was founded on January 25, 1966, through the efforts of forty black women known as the "Our Concern Committee." They were concerned about the school policy of requiring pregnant students to drop out of school. The first school was above the Shiloh Tabernacle and was a privately run school with MPS support services, similar to the present-day partnership schools. Lady Pitts became part of MPS in the early 1970s. The school provides comprehensive services to 200 pregnant students, grades six through twelve and a special completion program with job training for forty-five parenting students with twelve or more credits. At Lady Pitts, Daniels taught prenatal health until her retirement.

Daniels is a member of Holy Redeemer Church of God in Christ, where she is actively involved in the youth ministry. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Links and the Bethesda Senior Citizens Board. She and her husband, John, have a son and a daughter.

Daniels was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 26, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Irma Daniels was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 26, 2007, in Mequon, Wisconsin, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. High school health teacher Irma Daniels (1949 -) taught in Milwaukee Public Schools and Lady Pitts School Age Parent Center.

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:

Daniels, Irma, 1949-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Daniels, Irma, 1949- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

High School Health Teacher

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Irma Daniels, November 26, 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 Irma Daniels, Section A2007_329_001_001, TRT: 0:31:10 ?

Irma Daniels was born on April 21, 1949 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Daisy Hortman Hall and Levester Hall. Her maternal great-grandfather, Dillard Smith, Sr., purchased the 225-acre Smith Settlement in Gibsland, Louisiana after his emancipation, and the property remained in her family despite numerous attempts by whites to dispossess them of it. Daniel's maternal grandmother, Pearl Smith Hortman, was born on the Smith Settlement, and raised nine children with Daniels' maternal grandfather, sharecropper Alex Hortman, Sr. of Sondheimer, Louisiana. Daniels' paternal grandfather, Margo Hall, had white ancestors, and sharecropped in Prentiss, Mississippi. After her paternal

grandmother died, he remarried and moved his family to Louisiana, where Daniels' parents met and married. They later relocated to Milwaukee, where Daniels' maternal grandfather was employed by a brewery, her mother was a hospital attendant at the Milwaukee County Hospital and her father worked as a spray painter for the Chain Belt Company.

Video Oral History Interview with Irma Daniels, Section A2007_329_001_002, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Irma Daniels grew up in the predominantly black Brewer's Hill neighborhood of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She learned to read at an early age, and enrolled at Palmer Elementary School in 1955. Upon transferring to the Twelfth Street Elementary School, Daniels was influenced by her third grade teacher, Mrs. Johnson, who commanded respect in the classroom. She went on to attend Robert Fulton Junior High School, and then the all-black North Division High School, where she was mentored by her cheerleading coach, Sarah Grant. Daniels excelled in math and aspired to become an accountant, until enrolling in an advanced mathematics course in which the teacher, Miss Fox, failed to control the classroom. From that time, Daniels aspired to teach, and was active with the Future Teachers of America. She graduated in 1966, and matriculated at Wisconsin State University-Oshkosh, where she majored in physical education and health. Daniels also recalls her experiences as a member of the Church of God in Christ.

Video Oral History Interview with Irma Daniels, Section A2007_329_001_003, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Irma Daniels attended the Wisconsin State University-Oshkosh in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where she experienced racial discrimination. She was accosted with racial slurs, and her white female classmates disparaged her hair and skin. At the start of her junior year, Daniels joined the Black Student Union. A few months later, in November of 1968, the organization occupied the administration office to protest the lack of black history courses and black professors. The National Guard was called, and ninety-four black students were arrested and expelled, including Daniels. Civil rights attorney Lloyd A. Barbee represented the Oshkosh 94 in court, and won the right of the students to return to school the following year. Daniels worked as a high school teacher's assistant during her suspension, and graduated from Wisconsin State University-Oshkosh in 1971. She talks about segregation in the South and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as well as Milwaukee's civic leaders Vel Phillips and Father James Groppi.

Video Oral History Interview with Irma Daniels, Section A2007_329_001_004, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Irma Daniels began teaching in 1971 at a school in the all-white community of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where she experienced racial discrimination. In 1972, she married attorney John W. Daniels, Jr., and they moved to Boston, Massachusetts. There, Daniels taught physical education at Clarence R. Edwards Junior High School in the poor, all-white Charlestown neighborhood. She was one of three black teachers during the school's desegregation process, and was threatened with racial slurs by the white students. However, she gained her students' support after coaching the girls' basketball team, who won the championship game. In 1974, Daniels returned to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she worked at Milwaukee City Hall for one year, and then taught in the Milwaukee Public Schools. In 1978, Daniels was hired as a prenatal health teacher at the Lady Pitts School for pregnant teenagers, where she helped her students prepare for motherhood. She also talks about Title IX protections, teenage pregnancy and charter schools.

Video Oral History Interview with Irma Daniels, Section A2007_329_001_005, TRT: 0:25:15 ?

Irma Daniels taught prenatal health classes to pregnant teenagers at the Lady Pitts School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her curriculum included labor

terminology and breathing techniques, as well as field trips to hospitals and educational conventions. Daniels retired in 2004, after a twenty-five year career as a prenatal health teacher. She remembers her former students, and reflects upon her concerns for the African American community, including parenting practices and the perceptions of teenage pregnancy. Daniels also reflects upon her life, legacy and family. She describes how she would like to be remembered, and concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.