

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paula McClain

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McClain, Paula Denice
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paula McClain,
Dates:	February 22, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:26:44).
Abstract:	Political science professor and public policy professor Paula McClain (1950 -) was a professor at Duke University, where she founded the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Gender in the Social Sciences. Her publications included the popular textbook 'American Government in Black and White.' McClain was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 22, 2012, in Durham, North Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_069
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Political science professor and public policy professor Paula D. McClain was born on January 3, 1950 in Louisville, Kentucky to Mabel T. Molock and Robert Landis McClain. After graduating from East Anchorage High School in Anchorage, Alaska in 1968, McClain enrolled at Howard University. In 1970, McClain served as a program coordinator for the National Coordinating Council on Drug Abuse Education and Information. She interned in 1971 with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Office of Compliance where she briefed and researched violations of discrimination in the utility of industry. McClain received her B.A. degree in political science from Howard University in 1972. She went on to pursue graduate education at Howard University, finishing her M.A. degree in political science in 1974.

McClain then worked as a consultant for *Adaptive Systems* in Annapolis, Maryland and the Social Science Research Center at Howard University. By 1977, she had also completed her Ph.D. degree from Howard University, and began teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) in political science studies and African American Studies. McClain published her first book *Alienation and Resistance: The Political Behavior of Afro-Canadians* while at UWM. McClain received a postdoctoral fellowship and worked as a research associate in the Analysis Center at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1980-81 academic year. She then began teaching at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona in the School of Public Affairs. By 1990, McClain was serving as the acting director for the Doctorate of Public Administration Program. Also in 1990, McClain and Harold M. Rose released *Race, Place, and Risk: Black Homicide in Urban America*. The book was awarded the National Conference of Black Political Scientists' Best Book Award for a previously published book that has made a substantial and continuing contribution. In 1991, McClain joined the faculty at the University of Virginia as a professor of government and foreign affairs. She served as department chair from 1994-1997. In 1995, McClain released the first edition of *Can We All Get Along? Racial and Ethnic Minorities in American Politics*, which won the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights in North America Award for

Outstanding Scholarship in the Subject of Intolerance. In 2000 McClain joined the faculty at Duke University as a professor of political science and professor of public policy. In 2001, she began *The Durham Pilot Project*, examining racial attitudes among blacks, whites and Latinos in the South. While working on this project, she became the third woman and the first African American elected to serve as Chair of Academic Council at Duke University (2007-2009). Since 2004, she has served as co-director of the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Gender in the Social Sciences. She also is the director the *Ralph Bunche Summer Institute*, a program of the American Political Science Association that is hosted by Duke and funded by the National Science Foundation. McClain and her husband Paul Jacobson have two daughters, Kristina L. McClain-Jacobson Ragland and Jessica A. McClain-Jacobson.

Paula McClain was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 22, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paula McClain was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 22, 2012, in Durham, North Carolina, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Political science professor and public policy professor Paula McClain (1950 -) was a professor at Duke University, where she founded the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Gender in the Social Sciences. Her publications included the popular textbook 'American Government in Black and White.'

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:

McClain, Paula Denise

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
McClain, Paula Denice--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Political Science Professor

Public Policy Professor

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 Paula McClain, February 22, 2012. 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 Paula McClain, Section A2012_069_001_001, TRT: 1:29:38 ?

Paula McClain was born on January 3, 1950 in Louisville, Kentucky to Mabel Molock McClain and Robert McClain, Sr. Her paternal family was descended from an interracial couple in Columbia, Tennessee, where her grandfather, Willie McClain, was born. He married McClain's paternal grandmother, Julia Russell McClain, and worked as an organizer for the International Hod Carriers' Building and Common Laborers' Union of America. McClain's maternal family originated in Maryland, where her great-grandfather, Francis Molock, was a minister. Her maternal grandfather, Harrison Molock, graduated from Delaware's State College for Colored Students, and became a teacher. After marrying her grandmother, Evelyn Rowley Molock, he opened several businesses in Atlantic City, New Jersey. McClain's parents met during World War II, when her mother was a student at the Hampton Institute and her father was stationed at Fort Eustis, Virginia. Later, after he returned from the Korean War, McClain's family moved to Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula McClain, Section A2012_069_001_002, TRT: 2:28:27 ?

Paula McClain's father, Robert McClain, Sr., was stationed with the U.S. Army at Fort Huachuca in Arizona. There, she attended the Colonel Young School and Colonel Johnson School. She learned to play the flute, and received the John Philip Sousa Award and the American Legion School Award. When McClain was fifteen years old, her mother, Mabel Molock McClain, died suddenly at the age of forty years old. Her father received orders to move to Anchorage, Alaska, where McClain's family joined a small but influential African American community that included professionals and wealthy business owners like Zula Swanson. McClain attended East Anchorage High School, where she was one of the few African American students placed in the advanced track. She joined the student council and band, and became the head of the girls service society and the drum majorettes. After graduating from high school, McClain enrolled at Howard University with aspirations of becoming a lawyer.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula McClain, Section A2012_069_001_003, TRT: 3:30:29 ?

Paula McClain graduated from East Anchorage High School in Anchorage, Alaska just after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. Due to Alaska's isolation from the continental United States, McClain and her classmates did not learn the news of Dr. King's death until the day after his assassination. After graduating, McClain enrolled at Howard University in Washington, D.C. She majored in political science, and aspired to attend law school. In addition to studying, McClain worked part time on Capitol Hill as at the National Coordinating Council on Drug Abuse Education and Information and as an assistant to U.S. congressmen Howard Wallace Pollock, Mike Gravel and Birch Bayh from Alaska. During her junior year, McClain decided to pursue an academic career in the political sciences. She remained at Howard University, and enrolled in a Ph.D. program under Ronald Walters and William Ellis. During her graduate studies, McClain interned at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula McClain, Section A2012_069_001_004, TRT: 4:29:38 ?

Paula McClain earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Howard University in Washington, D.C. While there, she also worked as an assistant for several U.S. congressmen from Alaska. Although she was a registered Democrat, McClain initially worked for Howard Wallace Pollock, who was a Republican. She then moved to the Democratic side of aisle, where she worked for Mike Gravel and Birch Bayh. During her time on Capitol Hill, McClain witnessed the campaign and election of President Richard Nixon in 1968, as well as the Watergate scandal in the early 1970s. After her graduation in 1972, McClain joined the graduate program in political science at Howard University. She also designed research manuals for the university's Social Science Research Center. For her master's thesis, McClain studied the black communities in several Canadian cities, which she compared to the African American experience. McClain received her Ph.D. degree in political science in 1977.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula McClain, Section A2012_069_001_005, TRT: 5:28:58 ?

Paula McClain earned a Ph.D. degree in political science from Howard University in 1977, and then accepted an assistant professorship at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Although she liked the department and her colleagues, who included urban geographer Harold Rose, McClain left the university in 1980. She began a post-doctoral fellowship at the Wharton School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she studied at the Analysis Center for Evaluation of Energy Modeling and Statistics. In 1982, McClain moved to Tempe, Arizona to become an associate professor at Arizona State University. While there, she met her husband, attorney Paul C. Jacobson; and published 'Urban Minority Administrators' with her colleague, Albert Karnig. Then, in 1989, McClain and Rose published 'Race, Place, and Risk,' which was a quantitative study of black on black homicide. In 1991, McClain moved with her family to Charlottesville, Virginia, where she accepted a professorship at the University of Virginia.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula McClain, Section A2012_069_001_006, TRT: 6:29:11 ?

Paula McClain taught political science at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia from 1991 to 2000. During this time, she served as the chairperson of the Woodrow Wilson Department of Government and Foreign Affairs and published several political science textbooks, including "'Can We All Get Along?'" and 'American Government in Black and White.' As a member of the American Political Science Association (APSA), McClain was recognized for her scholarship by the APSA Committee on the Status of Blacks in 1995. In 2000, McClain joined the faculty of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. During her tenure there, she served as the chairperson of the Academic Council and the Appointment, Promotion, Tenure Committee, and founded the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Gender in the Social Sciences. With her graduate students, McClain also worked on the Durham Pilot Project, which studied the perceptions of Latino immigration among black and white communities in the South.

Video Oral History Interview with Paula McClain, Section A2012_069_001_007, TRT: 7:30:23 ?

Paula McClain published 'American Government in Black and White' with her former graduate student, Steven C. Tauber, in 2010. In the textbook, McClain explained the history of the U.S. government with an emphasis on the role of African Americans, as well as Native Americans and other minority groups. McClain talks about her research projects, as well as her plans for the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Gender in the Social Sciences in Durham, North Carolina. She describes her hopes for the black community, and shares her

concerns about the economic disparities among African Americans. She also talks about the status of black women in academia, her experiences as a mother and her advice for balancing work and family life. McClain reflects upon her life and legacy, and concludes the interview by describing how she would like to be remembered.