

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Tracey Edmonds

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Edmonds, Tracey E.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Tracey Edmonds,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 19, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:59:53).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Film producer and talent manager Tracey Edmonds (1967 - ) was the founder and CEO of Edmonds Entertainment Group, which produced numerous films and television shows including <i>Soul Food</i> , <i>Josie and the Pussycats</i> , <i>Good Luck Chuck</i> , <i>Who's Your Caddy?</i> and <i>Jumping the Broom</i> . Edmonds was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 19, 2013, in Beverly Hills, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_313
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Film producer and talent manager Tracey E. Edmonds was born on February 18, 1967 in Los Angeles, California to Jacqueline and George McQuarn. Edmonds graduated from Stanford University with her B.A. degree in psychobiology in 1987.

Upon graduation, Edmonds ran a successful mortgage and real estate business. Then, in 1993, she created Edmonds Entertainment Group, Inc., a multi-million dollar enterprise actively involved in all aspects of the entertainment business. Edmonds Entertainment produced the film *Soul Food* in 1997, which earned five NAACP Image Awards. The success of Edmonds Entertainment set the stage for the independent film production company, e2 Filmworks. Edmonds produced two independent films under this banner: *Hav Plenty*, which was released in 1998; and 2001's *Punks*. In 2004, she executive produced the reality show *College Hill*, the first African American reality program on BET, which set a network record as BET's highest rated series premiere. Edmonds also produced the series *Lil' Kim: Countdown to Lockdown*, as well as *DMX: Soul of a Man*, which both aired on BET in 2006. She has produced a number of other films and television shows, including *Light It Up*, *Soul Food: The Series*, *Josie and the Pussycats*, *Maniac Magee*, *Keyshia Cole: The Way It Is*, *Good Luck Chuck*, *Who's Your Caddy?*, *New in Town*, and *Jumping the Broom*, which won two NAACP Image Awards.

In 2006, Edmonds was hired as chief operating officer and president of Our Stories Films, where she oversees the development and production of projects for urban audiences. In 2013, she launched ALRIGHT TV, an inspirational, faith-friendly YouTube Premium channel, for which she serves as president and chief executive officer. Edmonds has served on the boards of the American Film Institute, People for the American Way, Children Uniting Nations, and the Producers Guild of America. She also served as a Global Ambassador for CARE, a leading humanitarian organization that works to fight global poverty. Edmonds has won numerous awards, including Turner Broadcasting System's Tower of Power Award in 2000; *Ebony* magazine's Outstanding Women

In Marketing & Communications Entrepreneur Award in 2002; the Girls, Inc. Award in 2004; the National Organization for Women's Excellence in Media Award in 2005; and The Caucus for Television Producers, Writers and Directors Diversity Award in 2006. She has also received an Honorary Doctorate degree in business from Southern University.

Edmonds resides in Beverly Hills, California with her two sons, Brandon and Dylan.

Tracey Edmonds was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 19, 2013.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Tracey Edmonds was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 19, 2013, in Beverly Hills, California, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Film producer and talent manager Tracey Edmonds (1967 - ) was the founder and CEO of Edmonds Entertainment Group, which produced numerous films and television shows including *Soul Food*, *Josie and the Pussycats*, *Good Luck Chuck*, *Who's Your Caddy?* and *Jumping the Broom*.

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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:

Edmonds, Tracey E.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Edmonds, Tracey E.--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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Edmonds Entertainment (Firm)

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## Occupations:

Talent Manager

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Film Producer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

EntertainmentMakers

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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 Tracey Edmonds, November 19, 2013. 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.

## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Tracey Edmonds, Section A2013\_313\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:50 ?

Tracey Edmonds was born on February 18, 1967 in Los Angeles, California to Jacqueline Moten McQuarn and George McQuarn. Her maternal great-grandmother, Molly O'Bryant, was born to parents of African American and Irish descent in Houston, Texas. There, she married Joe O'Bryant, who had Native American and African American heritage, and Edmonds' grandmother, Versie O'Bryant Moten, was one of the thirteen children born to their union. She married Edmonds' grandfather, Leon Moten, in Huntsville, Texas; and while he was serving in the Korean War, she relocated the family to Compton, California. Edmonds' mother attended the private St. Anthony High School in Long Beach, California, where she was the only African American student. Edmonds' father was raised by Mary Tejada McQuarn and Luther McQuarn; although there were doubts to his paternity. He grew up in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, where he excelled as a baseball player, and attended the University of California, Los Angeles on an athletic scholarship.

Video Oral History Interview with Tracey Edmonds, Section A2013\_313\_001\_002, TRT: 2:32:36 ?

Tracey Edmonds' parents, Jacqueline Moten McQuarn and George McQuarn, met during their high school years in Compton, California. Following graduation, her father attended the University of California, Los Angeles, where he was the catcher on the school's baseball team. After college, the two married and settled in Compton, where Edmonds spent her early years. There, her father coached basketball at Verbum Dei High School, and worked as the director of the City of Compton Parks and Recreation Department. Throughout her childhood, Edmonds' parents separated and reunited several times. Consequently, she attended several elementary and middle schools, dividing her time between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, Nevada, where her father had become the assistant basketball coach to Jerry Tarkanian at the University of Nevada. Nevertheless, Edmonds excelled academically, and was allowed to skip the fifth grade. Then, she moved to Long Beach, California in the tenth grade, where she attended Woodrow Wilson High School.

Video Oral History Interview with Tracey Edmonds, Section A2013\_313\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:11 ?

Tracey Edmonds attended Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, California, where she was a member of the cheerleading squad, the pepsters and Zygoma, a school sponsored group comprised of the top twenty female students. Even though the school was integrated, Edmonds was often discriminated against by her white peers, especially when she attended a school dance with a white classmate. She graduated second in her class in 1983, and went on to attend Stanford University in California. There, she took pre-med and psychology courses with Professors Richard Leakey and Philip Zimbardo, who led the 1971 Stanford prison experiment. She also worked as a research assistant in the psychology department and volunteered at the Bridge Peer Counseling Center. In her junior year, Edmonds spent a semester abroad in Florence, Italy. Following graduation, she considered attending medical school, but decided to work as a real estate broker at her mother's mortgage company in Newport Beach, California in order to save money.

Video Oral History Interview with Tracey Edmonds, Section A2013\_313\_001\_004, TRT: 4:30:28 ?

Tracey Edmonds worked as a real estate broker at her mother's mortgage firm in Newport Beach, California, and often spent her weekends in Los Angeles, California. During one of these trips, Edmonds was approached by Perri "Pebbles" Reid, who asked her to audition for a role in a Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds' music video. Edmonds was hired, but contracted the chickenpox days before the shooting, and was forced to back out. Shortly thereafter, Edmonds and her mother moved the mortgage company to Los Angeles, where she reconnected with Babyface. The two began dating and married a couple years later. As she was helping Babyface with his music career, Edmonds became interested in the entertainment industry, and created her own music publishing company, Yab Yum Entertainment, which partnered with Sony Music Entertainment, to write songs for artists such as Jon B. and TLC. Edmonds then founded the production company, Edmonds Entertainment Group, Inc., and began working on the film 'Soul Food.'

Video Oral History Interview with Tracey Edmonds, Section A2013\_313\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:40 ?

Tracey Edmonds produced a number of films and television shows through her production company, Edmonds Entertainment Group, Inc., including the highly acclaimed film, 'Soul Food.' In light of its success, Edmonds developed the script for a television show based on the movie. After several failed pitches, 'Soul Food' was acquired on Showtime, becoming one of the first and most successful series featuring an all-black cast on a premium cable network. Edmonds' next project was 'Light It Up,' a film about a high school protest that leads to a shooting. Unfortunately, the movie was received poorly due to the shooting at Columbine High School, which occurred just a month before the film's release. Edmonds also managed actors such as Loretta Devine and Rosario Dawson through her company, Edmonds Management Group, and continued to produce music through her label, Edmonds Record Group. In 2004, Edmonds produced BET's first reality show, 'College Hill,' which featured six African American college students.

Video Oral History Interview with Tracey Edmonds, Section A2013\_313\_001\_006, TRT: 6:28:08 ?

Tracey Edmonds produced BET's first reality television show, 'College Hill,' which became one of the network's highest rated shows. In 2006, Edmonds was named COO and president of Our Stories Films, a production company started by BET founder Robert L. Johnson. In 2011, Edmonds produced the film 'Jumping the Broom,' a romantic comedy loosely based on her own life, with Sony Pictures Entertainment. The movie was filmed in Nova Scotia, Canada, and featured actresses Angela Bassett and Paula Patton. In 2013, Edmonds launched the faith-based YouTube premium channel, Alright TV, which produced web series such as 'The Choir' and 'Walk This Way.' Edmonds and her ex-husband, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, had two sons, Brandon Edmonds and Dylan Edmonds. She reflects upon her career and professional legacy as well as her role as a mentor to aspiring film producers. She also describes her hopes and concerns for the black entertainment industry, and concludes the interview by describing how she would like to be remembered.