



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Annie Sullivan Oral History Interview, 2013

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Smithsonian Institution Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Annie Sullivan Oral History Interview
Identifier:	Record Unit 9635
Date:	2013
Extent:	0.25 cu. ft. (1 half document box)
Creator::	Sullivan, Annie
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9635, Annie Sullivan Oral History Interview

Historical Note

Ms. Sullivan moved to Washington, D.C., from Greenville, South Carolina, in 1985 and was able to get the job through someone her sister worked with who knew the higher-ups in building management at the National Air and Space Museum (NASM). She also was able to provide some well-known names, including that of Marion Barry's secretary, as references. She was hired as soon as President Ronald Reagan lifted the order that the Smithsonian hire only veterans for certain jobs. Sullivan worked at NASM from 1986-2006 on the cleaning staff, starting out cleaning offices in the basement and later moving up to the main exhibits floor. She recalled that everyone who worked in that division was African American.

Ms. Sullivan became very close with Deputy Director Donald Lopez during her tenure, and was frequently asked to clean certain offices upstairs where he and the executives worked. She was known as his "designated hugger" for frequently giving him hugs. She was also well-liked by the children of staff members who were sometimes brought to work and occasionally were put in her care. She recalled making lunch for them. She recalled how luxurious it felt to work at NASM in comparison to the jobs she had in the South. The vacuum cleaner worked, there was a break room with a refrigerator, oven and television, among other things. She also recalled several celebrity visitors to NASM, including Michael Jackson, Liza Minelli, John Forsyth, and Tom Cruise, with whom she was photographed shaking hands.

Introduction

The Oral History Program is part of the Smithsonian Institution Archives. The purpose of the program is to conduct interviews with current and retired members of the Smithsonian staff who have made significant contributions, administrative and scholarly, to the Institution. The project's goal is to supplement the

published record and manuscript collections in the Archives, focusing on the history of the Institution and contributions to the increase and diffusion of knowledge made by its scholars.

In 2013, Sarah J. Shoenfeld, former historian with the Institutional History Division of Smithsonian Institution Archives, interviewed her neighbor, Annie Sullivan, who worked at the National Air and Space Museum for twenty years to document her career and reminiscences of the museum.

Descriptive Entry

This Annie Sullivan Interview collection is comprised of 1 interview session, totaling approximately 1:10:11 hours of recordings and no transcript.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- African Americans -- History
- Building management
- Celebrities
- Interviews
- Museums -- Employees
- Oral history

Types of Materials:

- Compact discs
- Electronic records
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Cruise, Tom, 1962-
- Forsythe, John, 1918-2010
- Jackson, Michael, 1958-2009
- Lopez, Donald S., 1923-2008
- Minnelli, Liza
- National Air and Space Museum (U.S.)
- Shoenfeld, Sarah J., interviewer
- Smithsonian Institution. Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations
- Sullivan, Annie

Geographic Names:

- Greenville (S.C.)
- Washington (D.C.)

Container Listing

Interviews

Interviews

Interview 1: November 6, 2013

Interviews

Interview of Ms. Annie Sullivan discusses her career on the building management staff at the National Air and Space Museum from 1986 to 2006, c. 1980s to 2006.

Interviews

No transcript available of audio recording, 01:10:11 hours.

Interviews

Audio Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 01:10:11 hours

Note:

- Original Master: 1 digital audio .mp3 file
- Reference Copy: 1 digital audio .mp3 file.