

African American Oral History

Written by Robert ID1956

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History's voices will be moving west in October when MCI, Inc. and The HistoryMakers bring the world's largest African American oral history collection to Los Angeles, California. More than 250 teachers and students from the Los Angeles Unified School District will participate in Meet The HistoryMakers to hear stories from some of the world's foremost African American leaders, including NBA Champion and former member of the Los Angeles Lakers, Magic Johnson, former Deputy Attorney General of the United States, Eric Holder, Emmy Award Winning actress Della Reese, as well as others in the art, entertainment and business fields.

The HistoryMakers represents the single largest archival project of its kind in the world. Not since the recording of former slaves during the federal Work Projects Administration (WPA) Movement of the 1930s, has there been a methodic and wide-scale attempt to capture and preserve the testimonies of African Americans.

Local students and teachers will gather for the launch of a historical treasure at Meet The HistoryMakers: A Day of Education in Los Angeles at the California African American Museum on Thursday, Oct. 6, from to 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PST.

MCI partnered with The HistoryMakers to support MCI's core philanthropic mission of using innovative technology and strategies to improve educational opportunities and experiences for underserved youth. Adding to the impact of MCI's \$135,000 grant to The HistoryMakers, Los Angeles area students and teachers alike will benefit from educational presentations derived from the MCI Foundation's flagship program, MarcoPolo, which for the past eight years has provided a unique combination of rich, comprehensive online educational content and world-class professional development to K-12 teachers and students throughout the United States. The MarcoPolo program, accessible at <http://www.marcopolo-education.org>, contains more than 3,000 resources on African American History.

"The stories of our past shed light and provide direction to future generations," said Elisa L. Liang, MCI vice president of Community Relations. "MCI is proud to partner with The HistoryMakers to bring this treasure trove of African American history to Los Angeles and the world."

"Our partnership with MCI has enabled this unique educational event for Los Angeles students

and teachers," said The HistoryMakers founder, Julieanna Richardson. "The History Makers: A Day of Education is a unparalleled opportunity for young people to learn firsthand what it takes to make history."

At the conclusion of The HistoryMakers: A Day of Education, a screening of the film "Denmark Vesey's Rebellion" will begin at 3:00 p.m. PST. The viewing is followed by a reception to posthumously honor actor Brock Peters who is best known for his role in "To Kill a Mockingbird." Peters exemplified a person who not only understood the importance of a craft, but also the need to contribute to society and open doors previously closed to African Americans. He is a key HistoryMaker given his tremendous impact in creating and supporting many critical institutions such as the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

About The HistoryMakers

The HistoryMakers is a national, 501(c)(3) non-profit educational institution committed to preserving, developing and providing easy access to an internationally recognized, archival collection of thousands of African American video oral histories. The HistoryMakers is committed to making history accessible to the public through its website, digital archive, special events and public programming.

The HistoryMakers website, providing information about the nearly 1,000 African Americans interviewed, receives between two and three million hits per month.

Each interview conducted can be viewed in its entirety using The HistoryMakers Archive.

Events such as Meet the HistoryMakers: A Day of Education and programs such as The HistoryMakers Education Institute allow students and teachers alike to hear for themselves the amazing and inspiring stories of African Americans both well-known and unsung. For more information, visit

<http://www.thehistorymakers.com>

For more information about MCI, Inc., go to

<http://www.mci.com> .

About The MCI Foundation's MarcoPolo Program

MarcoPolo is a nonprofit consortium of leading national and international education organizations that have joined together with the MCI Foundation to provide the highest quality online educational content and professional development to teachers and students throughout the United States. MarcoPolo Content Partners include: the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (<http://www.kennedy-center.org>), National Council on Economic Education

(<http://www.ncee.net>), National Endowment for the Humanities

(<http://www.neh.gov>), The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

(<http://www.nctm.org>), International Reading Association

(<http://www.reading.org>), The National Council of Teachers of English

(<http://www.ncte.org>), American Association for the Advancement of Science

(<http://www.aaas.org>), and the National Geographic Society

(<http://www.nationalgeographic.com>). Visit <http://www.marcopolo-education.org>

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