The following resource guide highlights the remarkable story of pioneering journalist Vivian Castleberry who worked for decades to overcome the conventional barriers for women in the workplace. The primary and secondary sources provide background for historical context, individual perspectives and the lasting significance of her effort to advance opportunities afforded to women.
VIVIAN CASTLEBERRY:  
Breaking Barriers for Women in the Workplace

Oral History Interviews | Photographs | Artifacts  
Newspapers | Books | Articles | YouTube | Websites

During her three-decade tenure as the Women’s Editor at the *Dallas Times Herald* newspaper, Vivian Anderson Castleberry challenged the stodgy notions about what a female journalist could do and as a result was an agent of social change. When she started her career, most female journalists were relegated to “the women’s pages,” reporting on wedding announcements, recipes and club activities. Castleberry successfully pushed her editors to let her write about taboo subjects like race, illness, depression and abuse.

“I covered the cutting edge of change stories. Our department was the very first in this city to cover those significant human-interest stories. We covered stuff that was not even acknowledged at that time. We had to get away from the fluff, and we had to get into the hardcore human dimensions. And I did that from the very word go.”

— Vivian Castleberry  
Oral History interview recorded 2004

MUSEUM COLLECTION

The Museum’s permanent collection provides audio, visual, documentary resources and artifacts; visit our [online collections database](#) for more information. For research assistance, please contact the Reading Room at [readingroom@jfk.org](mailto:readingroom@jfk.org) or 214.389.3070.

This selection of primary sources, including artifacts and oral history interviews, illuminate the life of Vivian Castleberry, how she balanced her family life and simultaneously worked as Editor of the Women’s section of the *Dallas Times Herald*. Her coverage of the Kennedy assassination from the Trade Mart Luncheon is an example of her trailblazing style of journalism.

**Oral History Interviews**  
Contact the Reading Room at [readingroom@jfk.org](mailto:readingroom@jfk.org) to listen to or order these interviews.

**Vivian Castleberry**  
Considered the “grandmother of women journalists in Dallas,” Castleberry was the longtime editor of women’s news at the *Dallas Times Herald*. On the day of the assassination, she was waiting at the Trade Mart to cover Jackie Kennedy’s visit to the city. After the shooting, Castleberry worked in the *Times Herald* newsroom and wrote several human interest stories that weekend. Recorded October 14, 1991, August 19, 2004, **August 2, 2006**, **April 18, 2008**, August 5, 2009, and June 15, 2015

**Bert Holmes**  
Longtime editor for the *Dallas Times Herald*, Holmes wrote community affairs columns from the 1960s until the 1990s. Recorded August 3, 1993.
Photographs

1989.033.0001.0025 – A color photograph showing the crowd at the Dallas Trade Mart luncheon with their heads bowed in prayer after receiving the news that President Kennedy and Governor Connally had been shot. Vivian Castleberry can be seen along the left edge in a red suit looking down at her reporter’s notebook.

Artifacts


1991.002.0001 - Vivian Castleberry’s reporter’s notebook from November 22, 1963. The notebook contains Castleberry’s notes about Jacqueline Kennedy, the décor at Trade Mart, the reaction of the luncheon attendees upon hearing about the assassination, and quotes from President Johnson.

1999.027.0649 - Newspaper clipping in two sections from the *Dallas Times Herald* dated Monday, September 30, 1968 titled, “Path to Unity / Kozol Tosses Dare,” written by Vivian Castleberry. The article is about race relations and the author Jonathan Kozol, who spoke at the Wellesley Book and Author benefit in Dallas.

Newspapers | Visit online newspaper sources at your local library or the Reading Room.

*The Dallas Morning News*

*The Dallas Times Herald*

Books | Visit our [Library Catalog](#) for complete list of books, magazines, and videos.


Articles


YouTube

Living History with Vivian Castleberry
Vivian Castleberry spoke with Museum Associate Curator Stephen Fagin about her experience the day of the assassination. Castleberry was waiting at the Trade Mart to cover Jackie Kennedy’s visit to the city when she learned that shots were fired at President Kennedy’s motorcade.

Call to Action: Vivian Castleberry
Vivian Castleberry shared stories about her career within the context of the women’s rights movement. This program was part of The Sixth Floor Museum’s Call to Action series.

Texas Trailblazer: Vivian Castleberry
KERA presents Texas Trailblazer: Vivian Castleberry (2009). This documentary tells her story in her words as the first female editor of the Dallas Times Herald in 1957. She transformed the content of the paper’s Living section from coverage of high society and weddings to include stories of social significance including child abuse, depression and women’s rights. Castleberry retired from the Dallas Times Herald after 28 years to pursue a second career as a peace activist. She co-founded the Women’s Center of Dallas and The Dallas Women’s Foundation and founded Peacemakers Incorporated. She was inducted into the Texas Women’s Hall of Fame in 1984.

Websites

Washington Press Club Foundation
The Women in Journalism project includes comprehensive, full-life interviews with women journalists—from pioneers of early women’s journalism, to champions of civil rights, to celebrities in the world of broadcast television—who have made significant contributions to society through careers in journalism.