

# The Clerk's Black History Series

## Debra DeBerry

### Clerk of Superior Court

### DeKalb County

## Trudy Haynes



November 23, 1926 - June 7, 2022

## First Black Woman TV Weather & News Reporter



**Trudy Haynes** was born Gertrude Daniels on November 23, 1926, in New York City, NY. She was an only child who benefitted from her parent's desire to provide her a solid education. She graduated from Forest Hills High School where she was the only black cheerleader on her team. In 1943, she entered Howard University to study sociology and psychology. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1947.

Given her natural beauty and poise, Trudy was picked up by the Phelia DeVore Charm and Modeling Agency in the early 1950s. The agency was known for marketing to ethnic consumers during the age of segregation. While she was with the DeVore agency, she was chosen to be the model for the advertisement for Lucky Strike cigarettes - the first Black women to be featured for the brand. Trudy appeared in multiple ads making her a veteran model for the agency. She later mentored actress/singer Diahann Carroll and actress Beah Richards, from the movie "A Raisin in the Sun" (1961) and "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" (1968).



Trudy entered broadcasting in 1956 as women's editor at the black-owned WCHB Radio station in Inkster, Michigan. She was initially hired as a receptionist, but due to her charming and outgoing personality, she was asked to host a 90-minute daily program for women. The program gave Trudy exposure and contacts in the journalism field. In 1963, Trudy accepted a position at ABC Network affiliate WXYZ-TV in Southfield, Michigan. There she became the first black weather person for the station. Two years later, in 1965, Trudy went to work for KYW-TV, in Philadelphia, PA, making her the first black news reporter on television. Trudy would remain with the station for another thirty-four years.



Since Trudy was the only Black reporter in the station's all-white newsroom, she noticed that there was very little coverage of Philadelphia's Black community, aside from accidents and murders. Trudy made it her mission to include Black people in her reports, demanding that they be included when her editors tried to cut them out of the final film. For many years, she worked as KYW-TV's "entertainment reporter. She also hosted programs such as "The Trudy Haynes Show", "Sunday Side Up", "Sunday Magazine", and the celebrity gossip segment "Trudy's Grapevine".



In the 1970s, Trudy broke another color barrier by becoming the first black judge for the Miss America Contest. As a judge, she continually challenged the standards of beauty that often alienated black women. After her retirement in 1999, Trudy continued to freelance and make guest appearances and promoting the careers of younger, upcoming journalists. She established her own production company, First Run Film/Video and became an activist for public access cable channels. In 1990, Trudy established a scholarship fund for Philadelphia-area students. In 1995, she won an Emmy award and was later inducted into the Broadcast Pioneers of Philadelphia Hall of Fame. In 1999, Trudy won the National Coalition Of 100 Black Women For Life Time Achievement As A Broadcast Journalist. She received numerous awards throughout her life.



Until the coronavirus pandemic, Trudy hosted a weekly public access talk show on PhillyCAM, The Trudy Haynes Show. In 2020, Ms. Haynes partnered with PhillyCAM to develop the Trudy Haynes Reporting Fellowship, which provides resources and coaching for radio and television reporting. Across her 30-plus-year career, Trudy interviewed such notable figures as Martin Luther King Jr., Muhammad Ali, President Lyndon Johnson, former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, former Teamster Union leader Jimmy Hoffa, Denzel Washington, and Tupac Shakur.



On June 7, 2022, Trudy Haynes passed peacefully at her home, surrounded by loved ones. She was 95 years old.

