

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Julie Embalabala

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key-Alternatives in Education Oral History project

Interview # EA-A-L-2018-049

Julie Embalabala, who home schooled her seven children during the 1990s and 2000s, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key-Alternatives in Education* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Sep 5, Oct 16 & Oct 19, 2018 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:47 + 2:06 + 1:00 / 1.78 + 2.1 + 1.0 = 4.88 hrs.

Session 1: Early life, education and marriage to Peter Embalabala

Session 2: Home schooling experiences with her seven children

Session 3: An overview of home schooling

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 28, 2019.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Julie Embalabala, *Alternatives in Education*, EA-A-L-2018-049

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Julie (Van Sledright) Embalabala was born in February 1961 in Grand Rapids, Michigan and was raised in a strong Dutch community that embraced the Dutch Reformed religion. The family attended the Christian Reformed Church and Julie attended parochial schools, graduating from Grand Rapids Christian High School in 1979. Contrary to her parents' preference, she then attended Central Michigan University, where she majored in school health education. Early in her college years she was inspired to home school her children, long before having any children of her own. Shortly after that, in 1984 Julie met Peter Embalabala, a graduate student from Kenya who was majoring in mathematics. They married in 1986 and soon had a family, which interrupted Julie's studies. She eventually earned her degree in 1991. That was also the year the family moved to Springfield, Illinois, where Peter found work teaching mathematics at Lincoln Land Community College.

Julie spent most of the next two decades raising and home schooling the couple's seven children. During the first few years, the family lived in a roughly 1,000 square foot home they rented near Pawnee, and in 1999 moved to a much larger farm house in rural Athens, Illinois. Julie talks extensively about the challenges and rewards of home schooling, and how the experience changed as the children grew older. They were involved in church activities and a variety of other activities, especially in 4-H and sports. Several of the children also took music lessons. Julie stressed the value of her children becoming independent learners, the benefits of multi-grade projects, and the many field trips and vacations they took, all with the focus on learning. All the children went on to attend Lincoln Land Community College, and most earned a college or higher degree. All are successful, productive members of society. Julie also discussed the experience of raising biracial children, and their efforts to expose the children to their father's Kenyan culture while being immersed in American culture.

Subject Headings/Key Words: home schooling; religious motivations for home schooling; Peter Embalabala; Lincoln Land Community College; Christian Liberty Academy curricula for home schooling; Dutch Reformed community of Michigan; Central Michigan University; challenges for biracial children; Church of the Nazarene, Springfield, Illinois

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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