

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Earl G. Graves, Sr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Graves, Earl G. , 1935-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Earl G. Graves, Sr.,
Dates:	December 18, 2000
Bulk Dates:	2000
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:50:39).
Abstract:	Magazine publishing chief executive Earl G. Graves, Sr. (1935 - 2020) is the founder of Black Enterprise Magazine and author of New York Times bestseller, How to Succeed in Business Without Being White. Graves was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 18, 2000, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2000_023
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Earl G. Graves was raised in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of New York, where he learned hard work and perseverance from his parents, Earl Godwin and Winifred Sealy Graves. After receiving a B.A. in economics from Morgan State University he served two years in the Army, followed by a three year stint as Senator Robert F. Kennedy's administrative assistant. After Kennedy's assassination Graves entered the business arena, where he was to realize unprecedented success.

Since founding Black Enterprise Magazine in 1970, Earl Graves has been named one of the ten most outstanding minority businessmen in the country by the President of the United States, and received the National Award of Excellence in recognition of his achievements in minority business enterprise. Black Enterprise Magazine is recognized as the definitive resource for African American business professionals, entrepreneurs and policy makers in the public and private sectors.

Graves is President and Chief Executive Officer of Earl G. Graves, Ltd., parent corporation for the Earl G. Graves Publishing Company which publishes Black Enterprise Magazine. He also serves as Chairman and CEO of Pepsi-Cola of Washington, D.C., L.P., the largest minority-controlled Pepsi-Cola franchise in the U.S. He is also a General Partner of Egoli Beverages, L.P., the Pepsi-Cola franchise bottler of South Africa.

In 1999, he received the 84th NAACP Spingarn Medal, the highest achievement award for African Americans. He was named one of the Top 100 Business News Luminaries of the Century, and his book "How to Succeed in Business Without Being White" was listed among the New York Times and Wall Street Journals Business Best Sellers. A staunch advocate of higher education, Graves is committed to advancing business education and opportunities for our nation's youth. He has also been recognized for his business leadership and community service by the US Department of Commerce, the City of New York and the National Conference for Community and Justice, among others.

He resided in New York with his late wife of 37 years, Barbara, with whom he had three sons.

Graves passed away on April 6, 2020.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Earl G. Graves, Sr. was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on December 18, 2000, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Magazine publishing chief executive Earl G. Graves, Sr. (1935 - 2020) is the founder of Black Enterprise Magazine and author of New York Times bestseller, *How to Succeed in Business Without Being White*.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Graves, Earl G. , 1935-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Graves, Earl G. , 1935---Interviews

African American businesspeople--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Magazine Publishing Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Earl G. Graves, Sr., December 18, 2000. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Earl G. Graves, Sr., Section A2000_023_001_001, TRT: 0:30:27
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Publisher Earl G. Graves begins by describing his father's personality, education, and family background. He recalls his mother's personality and her prominent involvement in his childhood education and upbringing. Graves details his experiences growing up in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant. He describes how the neighborhood has changed from when he was a child, and explains his efforts to improve the conditions of the neighborhood upon his return as an adult. Graves details the values and culture associated with his West Indian heritage, and addresses perceptions of West Indians by others in the black community. Graves closes the interview by describing his childhood aspirations and his relationship with his father.

African American fathers--New York (State)--Brooklyn.

African American mothers--New York (State)--Brooklyn.

African American neighborhoods--New York (State)--Brooklyn.

Bedford-Stuyvesant (New York, N.Y.)

West Indian Americans.

Video Oral History Interview with Earl G. Graves, Sr., Section A2000_023_001_002, TRT: 0:29:49
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Earl G. Graves begins by describing his high school experience at Erasmus Hall in Brooklyn. He explains why he chose to attend college at Morgan State University in Baltimore. Graves details his college experience, including how it sharply contrasted with his life in Brooklyn. He briefly describes receiving the news of his father's death. Graves details his experience in the Armed Forces, including his time in Special Forces. Graves explains why he chose to start a career in real estate, and mentions some of his successes. He explains his choice to enter the political arena, as an aide to Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Graves closes by detailing his experience working for Kennedy, describing the skills and values he attained.

Education, Secondary--New York (State)--New York.

African American college students--Maryland--Baltimore.

Erasmus Hall High School

Morgan State University.

African American soldiers.

Kennedy, Robert F., 1925-1968

African American real estate agents.

Video Oral History Interview with Earl G. Graves, Sr., Section A2000_023_001_003, TRT: 0:30:12
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Publisher Earl G. Graves describes his study of entrepreneurship in Barbados and how it helped to set his career course. He discusses his first foray into business, as the founder of a consulting firm. Graves describes the founding and early years of Black Enterprise magazine, detailing the initial and continuing importance of the magazine. He outlines various features in Black Enterprise that aided the African American business community. Graves talks about the importance of promoting Black Enterprise in the advertising industry and among established businesses. Graves briefly discusses the future of African American business. He closes by detailing his involvement in political and community causes.

African American business enterprises.

Advertising.

Entrepreneurship.

Political activism.

Video Oral History Interview with Earl G. Graves, Sr., Section A2000_023_001_004, TRT: 0:20:11
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Earl G. Graves reflects on personal issues in this brief closing to the interview. He discusses his future plans and direction of his business ventures. He explains the importance of his family in his life and his accomplishments. He discusses what he would like his legacy to be. Finally, he talks about what he believes his parents would think about him, were they alive. The interview concludes with a showcase of various photos featuring Graves with luminaries such as Nelson Mandela, Sidney Poitier, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, and Muhammad Ali.

Photographs.

Mandela, Nelson, 1918-2013.

Clinton, Bill, 1946-

Muhammad, Ali.

Carter, Jimmy, 1924-.

Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994.

Reagan, Ronald.