

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Wayne Watson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Watson, Wayne, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Wayne Watson,
Dates:	May 13, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:54:02).
Abstract:	Chancellor Wayne Watson (1945 -) leads the City Colleges of Chicago. Watson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 13, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_104
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chancellor of the largest community college system in the country, Wayne D. Watson, was born September 1, 1945, in Chicago, Illinois. Watson's parents sacrificed financially to send him to private Catholic schools, and at Mt. Carmel High School, Watson was a standout on the wrestling team, though an average student. After graduation in 1964, Watson was invited to try out for the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Team. At Joliet Junior College, Watson won the junior college wrestling championship and earned his A.A. degree. At Northwestern University, Watson received three degrees: his B.A. degree in education in 1968; his M.A. degree in education and sociology in 1970; and his Ph. D in education administration in 1972.

After earning his doctorate, Watson served as associate professor of education at Shaw University from 1972 to 1975. Flight lessons and pilot training led to two years as general manager of Wheeler Airlines, the first African American company offering regularly scheduled flights. From 1977 to 1978, Watson served as headmaster of Boggs Academy; In 1978, he returned to Chicago, accepting a position at Malcolm X College. While at Malcolm X, Watson was appointed vice president of instructional services, where he served from 1980 to 1983. Leaving Malcolm X, Watson was named vice president of the City Colleges of Chicago, where he remained until 1986. Watson went on to become president of both Harold Washington College and Kennedy-King College in the 1990s

As chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago, Watson oversaw seven community colleges in a system that served 170,000 students; over 9,500 employees; and had an annual operating budget of \$260 million. Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley appointed Watson to the seven-member Bronzeville Committee and the Chicago Fire Department Committee for Promotion and Rank. Watson also served as a member of the Fantus Health Center Advisory Board, and was co-chairman of the Capital Development Board for Chicago Public Schools. Watson was honored as a distinguished alumnus by Northwestern University.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Wayne Watson was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 13, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Chancellor Wayne Watson (1945 -) leads the City Colleges of Chicago.

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:

- Watson, Wayne, 1945-
- Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)
- Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

- African Americans--Interviews
 - Watson, Wayne, 1945---Interviews
-

Organizations:

- HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)
 - The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection
 - City Colleges of Chicago
-

Occupations:

Chancellor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Wayne Watson, May 13, 2003. 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 Wayne Watson, Section A2003_104_001_001, TRT: 0:30:02 ? Wayne D. Watson starts by telling us of his family history, mainly history that deals with his grandfather. He tells the story of how his grandfather was run out of Anderson, South Carolina by white men and relocated to Chicago, Illinois. He also gives insight into his father's life and speaks in detail about his father's popularity and athleticism. Watson knows less about his mother but does recall a story of a discriminatory situation she encountered on the job. He recalls his youth and thriving outdoors while playing with his friends. Watson also tells of being transferred from one Catholic school to another because of his race. He then reveals his stuttering problem and how teachers and students often made his life difficult. He speaks of why the speech disorder occurs and how he faced and

beat it, yet still has to deal with it from time to time in adult life.

Video Oral History Interview with Wayne Watson, Section A2003_104_001_002, TRT: 0:29:19 ?

Wayne D. Watson starts by mentioning his childhood mentors. He speaks of the positive influence his parents and other select people in school had on him. He then tells the story of how he decided to go to Mount Carmel High School in Chicago, Illinois simply because he heard a schoolmate, who was smart and athletic, say he was going to attend there. Watson tells of his experience at Mount Carmel as being consumed with wrestling, a sport in which he was very successful. He tells an interesting account on how he started dating a high school sweetheart. He then explains how wrestling opened various doors in his life and eventually led him to Northwestern University. After wrestling competitively for a large portion of his life he decided to focus on academics. Watson obtained his Master's and Ph.D. degrees from Northwestern. During these years, he began his studies of oral history, which led him to meet author Alex Haley, whom he worked with for four years. He then speaks on African Americans'sd struggle through history and the lack of appreciation he feels they have received.

Video Oral History Interview with Wayne Watson, Section A2003_104_001_003, TRT: 0:28:07 ?

After receiving his Ph.D. from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Wayne D. Watson took a job teaching at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. He believes that he didn't really get a feel for what the South was, initially, because he focused all of his attention on the university and stayed close to campus. While in Raleigh, Watson began taking flying lessons and eventually left Shaw University to be General Manager of Wheeler Airlines, the only black airline at the time. He stayed with Wheeler for only two years and blamed President Ronald Reagan's deregulation of the airline industry for his departure. From there he took a position as Head Master at Boggs Academy, a private high school in Keysville, Georgia. His experience there was short-lived and he tells a story of the scandal that made him leave the school. After he left Boggs Academy, Watson decided to move back home, to Chicago, Illinois, and was told by a colleague to look for a job with the City Colleges of Chicago. He accepted a position with Malcolm X College and speaks of how he worked his way up through the ranks at the City Colleges. Watson goes in depth on the importance of the City Colleges in the community. He talks of the Colleges's rich history and hopes for the future and tells that the biggest problem presently with the Colleges is the lack of money, even though enrollment has increased. He then speaks of Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley's involvement with the location of the new Kennedy-King College that is to be built. He tells of the respect he has for the Mayor and how the college's new location will be the anchor in the Englewood neighborhood.

Video Oral History Interview with Wayne Watson, Section A2003_104_001_004, TRT: 0:26:34 ?

Wayne D. Watson tells how the new Kennedy-King College will be an anchor in the Englewood neighborhood. He speaks about education playing a key role in the community. He then talks about the recent increase in enrollment for the City Colleges of Chicago and tells of how the students can attend without taking out a loan but instead using a Pell Grant. Watson then tells of his vision for the City Colleges of Chicago. He is proud of that fact that students can attend reasonably-priced classes and obtain college credits that will transfer to other schools or help them gain workforce experience. He sees the role of the community college to be all-accepting and to improve one's quality of life. However, he does not feel that America is at the place it needs to be in the treatment and acceptance of African Americans in order to make this dream a reality. Watson's hopes for the future of the black community are to not have to struggle. He describes the

neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois where he lives and speaks of wanting to decrease the high poverty level. As his legacy, Wayne D. Watson wants to be remembered as a man who loved his children and helped them survive. He would like to be remembered as someone who cared for his family and loved ones and one who was an educator with the hopes of making life better for others. Following are a selection of photographs from Wayne D. Watson's life.