

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ray Robinson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Robinson, Ray, 1947-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ray Robinson,
Dates:	August 14, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:47:00).
Abstract:	Telecommunications executive Ray Robinson (1947 -) is the retired president of AT&T's southern region and the president of Atlanta's historic East Lake Golf Club. Robinson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 14, 2003, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_191
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Business executive, community developer, and golf enthusiast, Ray M. Robinson was born on November 30, 1947, in McKinney, Texas. Robinson grew up in Dallas, and while still in high school worked as a communication technician, beginning a thirty-five-year career with AT&T.

In 1970, Robinson earned his B.A. degree in finance from the University of Denver, and the following year he received his M.B.A., degree also from that same institution. Simultaneously, Robinson began his climb up the corporate ladder at AT&T, relocating thirteen times as he took new assignments in marketing, sales, and regulatory affairs. Robinson finally settled in Atlanta, where he became president of the company's southern region.

Upon his retirement from AT&T in 2003, Robinson, an avid golfer, assumed the presidency of Atlanta's East Lake Golf Club and became vice chairman of the East Lake Community Foundation. Robinson helped revive Atlanta's historic golf course and revitalize the inner-city neighborhood surrounding it through redevelopment. This redevelopment included East Lake Family YMCA and Eastlake Junior Golf Academy. Under Robinson's leadership, the golf club signed a multiyear partnership with the Professional Golf Association, making the East Lake Course the primary host venue for the PGA Championship Tour.

Robinson served on the board of directors for several businesses and organizations, including Citizens Trust Bank, the Atlanta Metro Chamber of Commerce, and the *Atlanta Tribune* Editorial Advisory Board. Additionally, Robinson belonged to several civic groups, including the 100 Black Men of Atlanta and the NAACP. Robinson and his wife, Arlane, were married in 1969; they raised two children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ray Robinson was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 14, 2003, in Atlanta,

Georgia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Telecommunications executive Ray Robinson (1947 -) is the retired president of AT&T's southern region and the president of Atlanta's historic East Lake Golf Club.

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:

- Robinson, Ray, 1947-
- Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)
- Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

- African Americans--Interviews
 - Robinson, Ray, 1947- --Interviews
-

Organizations:

- HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)
 - The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection
 - AT & T
-

Occupations:

Telecommunications Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Ray Robinson, August 14, 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 Ray Robinson, Section A2003_191_001_001, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

Ray Robinson describes in detail his father's and mother's family backgrounds, recalling stories of their growing up in northern Texas. Robinson recounts vivid stories about his paternal grandfather, Vernon Robinson, who was a famous character in the lore of Corsicana, Texas. Ray Robinson then describes his own childhood, recalling Hamilton Park, his neighborhood on the north side of Dallas, Texas. He says Hamilton Park was an ideal community for him, and that despite segregation, African American residents had all the amenities they desired. He also describes his mischievous childhood personality, and talks about the role of church in his upbringing.

Video Oral History Interview with Ray Robinson, Section A2003_191_001_002, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

Ray Robinson describes his schooling experience at Hamilton Park School, where he attended elementary, junior high, and senior high. He credits many teachers with creating a positive learning environment at Hamilton Park. He then describes the social segregation in Dallas during the 1950s. He then recalls the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Robinson describes his first job after graduating high school, as a technician at AT&T. He then explains why he left his job at AT&T to attend college at the University of Denver. He then recalls his experience at Denver, explaining his successful adjustment to an all-white environment.

Video Oral History Interview with Ray Robinson, Section A2003_191_001_003, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Ray Robinson discusses how he acquired a summer job at AT&T and explains his duties there. Next, he talks about his relationship with John King and talks about how King helped him financially in college and in getting into the Colorado National Guard. Robinson then remembers applying for jobs after graduate school and talks about why he decided to continue working for AT&T. He lists his qualifications and discusses whether affirmative action played a role in his hiring. Robinson tells about his position at NORAD where he was in charge of their communications. He remembers a DEFCON situation that arose there and gives the details behind it. Robinson lists the positions he's had with AT&T. Then, he explains a crisis at AT&T in which he was nearly forced to resign. He describes an advertising campaign in which AT&T crossed various racial lines and got in trouble. Robinson talks about how he helped the company regain its credibility within the African American community. Ray Robinson tells how he became involved with the East Lake Golf Club.

Video Oral History Interview with Ray Robinson, Section A2003_191_001_004, TRT: 0:22:30 ?

Ray Robinson discusses African American participation in golf, and explains the sport's recent increase in popularity among African Americans. He then details the successful history of East Lake Community Association, a mixed-income housing project built around the East Lake Golf Club. Robinson cites the participation of African American community members as vital to the club's success. Robinson shares his hopes and dreams for the African American community, hoping that blacks will be able to continue to excel in the business world. He also shares his plans for helping other communities to develop mixed-income housing developments. Robinson then considers his legacy and how he would like to be remembered.