

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Blanton Canady

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Canady, Blanton, 1948-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Blanton Canady,
<b>Dates:</b>	January 6, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:39:03).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Restaurant owner and operator Blanton Canady (1948 - ) owned and operated eleven McDonalds restaurants, and was active in the National Black McDonald's Operators Association, served as president of the Great Lakes region of the association. Canady was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 6, 2005, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_002
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

McDonald's owner/operator Blanton Canady was born November 25, 1948 in West Point, Georgia. His father was West Point's first black police officer and his mother was a graduate of Talladega College. Canady attended Robert S. Abbott Elementary School in Chicago and graduated from Tilden Technical High School in 1966. At the University of Illinois, Canady was active in the African American Studies program where Val Gray Ward mentored him. He earned his B.A. degree in 1970 and was hired by Illinois Bell in telecommunications. While there, he enrolled in the University of Chicago and was awarded his M.B.A. degree in 1975.

Canady was hired at Xerox Corporation in 1973, but moved to American Hospital Supply in 1976. In 1980, a friend introduced him to the opportunity of owning a McDonald's franchise. Assisted by his brothers Ronald and Mitchell, Canady obtained a franchise and then grew his business to seven restaurants with millions of dollars in sales. Following in the footsteps of Chicago's Herman Petty, the first black McDonald's licensee, Canady became active in the National Black McDonalds Owners Association (NBMOA) as president of the Great Lakes Region. Canady owns five restaurants including one at McCormick Place and another at Chicago's Navy Pier.

Active on the boards of the Midwest Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation and the New South Planning Board, Canady and his wife, Yvonne, have two children.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Blanton Canady was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 6, 2005, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Restaurant owner and operator Blanton Canady (1948 - ) owned and operated eleven McDonalds restaurants, and was active in the National Black McDonald's Operators Association, served as president of the Great Lakes region of the association.

## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

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

### Persons:

Canady, Blanton, 1948-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Canady, Blanton, 1948---Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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McDonald's Corporation.

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## Occupations:

Restaurant Owner and Operator

## HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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## 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 Blanton Canady, January 6, 2005. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Blanton Canady, Section A2005\_002\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:33 ?

Blanton Canady was born on November 25, 1948 in West Point, Georgia. His mother, Grace Warrick Canady, was born and raised in 1910 on a farm in Columbiana, Alabama. Her father was a light-skinned Methodist preacher and her mother was half-Indian. Canady's mother attended Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama and became a school teacher. Canady's maternal grandparents passed away before his birth. Canady's father, William Canady Jr., was born in October of 1913 in West Point, Georgia. He was an amateur prize-fighter until a street fight ended his career. He became the first black police officer in West Point. Canady's parents met and were married in the 1930s. Canady was the youngest of three sons, and remembers being a very shy child. He describes the activities he invented playing outdoors alone. The family left Georgia for the South Side of Chicago, Illinois in 1958. Canady talks about the

move and describes his experience at the Robert S. Abbott Elementary School.

Video Oral History Interview with Blanton Canady, Section A2005\_002\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:22 ?

Blanton Canady attended a segregated elementary school in West Point, Georgia, and transferred to the Robert S. Abbott Elementary School in Chicago, Illinois in the fourth grade. He graduated valedictorian of his eighth grade class in 1962, and remembers being stage frightened and forgetting his entire speech. Canady attended Tilden Technical High School in Chicago, Illinois from 1962 until 1966. He was active in the math and debate clubs, the National Honor's Society, and wanted to be an architect. He was accepted into the Illinois School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 1966. However, he later transferred into the College of Business. Canady describes the onset of the African American Studies program, and the work of HistoryMaker Val Gray Ward. Canady was involved in the Black Student Union [BSU], where he helped recruit 500 black students to the university, and pledged Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

Video Oral History Interview with Blanton Canady, Section A2005\_002\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:08 ?

Blanton Canady speaks about his early work and graduate school experiences. Canady graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's College of Business in 1970. For two years, he worked for the Illinois Bell telephone company to finance his graduate school education. In 1972, Canady enrolled in the University of Chicago's M.B.A. program after he impressed the dean of the school in an interview. In 1973, he began working for the Xerox Corporation as the Midwest Manager of Telecommunications while taking night classes and performing service in the U.S. National Guard on weekends. Canady received his M.B.A. in 1975, and was recruited by the American Hospital Supply Corporation in 1978 to work as their financial manager. He speaks about the skills he learned there, and of developing an interest in entrepreneurship.

Video Oral History Interview with Blanton Canady, Section A2005\_002\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:11 ?

Blanton Canady speaks about his transition into restaurant franchising. In 1980, he ran into an old friend on a business trip who was working as an auditor for McDonald's Corporation. Canady mentioned his interest in going into business on his own, and that he was unsure where to begin. He learned that McDonald's had been looking for new franchisees, particularly minorities. He contacted the application committee, and was selected for an interview, but was ultimately rejected for not meeting the financial requirements. After selling properties to raise funds, Canady was accepted into the training program six months later. Canady describes working part-time for McDonald's, and full-time for the American Hospital Supply Corporation for two years. He was offered his first franchise on the same day he was offered a promotion at the American Hospital Supply Corporation. Canady's first restaurant opened in January of 1981.

Video Oral History Interview with Blanton Canady, Section A2005\_002\_001\_005, TRT: 0:28:39 ?

Blanton Canady describes the history of black McDonald's owner-operators and the challenges they experienced as franchisees. Chicago, Illinois native Herman Petty became the country's first African American owner-operator in December of 1968. In 1972, Petty and cohort Roland Jones formed the Black McDonald's Operators Association (BMOA). Canady explains that black-owned restaurants were the furthest behind in terms of profitability, number of accounts, owners, and stores, but he and other members of the BMOA developed a course of action to reach parity with white-owned stores. Canady was elected president of the McDonald's Association of Chicagoland in 1990. At the time of the interview, he owned five locations in the Chicago area, and describes the challenges and rewards in restaurant management. He lists the volunteer organizations he is

involved in, addresses the criticism of McDonald's food, and shares his future plans.

Video Oral History Interview with Blanton Canady, Section A2005\_002\_001\_006, TRT: 0:14:10 ?

Blanton Canady speaks about his relationship with his family, and their involvement in the launching and maintenance of the franchise business. Canady opened his first restaurant in 1981 with the help of his older brother Mitchell Canady. Mitchell Canady became a general manager at one of the franchise locations. Canady's eldest brother, Ron Canady, also joined the business as supervisor to all the restaurant locations. Canady describes the involvement of several other family members, including his son and nephews. He speaks about their business relationship, commitment, and how they have been integral to the success of the franchise. On Christmas Day in 2001, Mitchell Canady was killed in a car accident. Forty-five days later, Ron Canady succumbed to colon cancer. Canady expresses his grief about losing his brothers, and shares what he has learned. He talks about his children and reflects upon his legacy, his future in franchising, and how he would like to be remembered.