

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with David Baker Lewis

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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>	Lewis, David Baker, 1944-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with David Baker Lewis,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 9, 2007 and October 26, 2012
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007 and 2012
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:01:42).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Bond lawyer David Baker Lewis (1944 - ) co-founded the law firm that became Lewis & Munday, LLC. Lewis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 9, 2007 and October 26, 2012, in Detroit, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_081
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Attorney David Baker Lewis was born on June 9, 1944 in Detroit, Michigan to Dorothy Florence Baker Lewis and Walton Adams Lewis. Lewis attended St. Peter Claver School, Courville Elementary School, Nolan Junior High School and graduated from John J. Pershing High School in 1962. As a business administration student at Oakland University, Lewis spent the summer of 1964 as an intern with Holderbank Financiere Glarus in Zurich, Switzerland. In 1965, Lewis earned his B.A. degree in business administration from Oakland University and later interned at Chicago's Northern Trust Bank in 1966. In 1965, Lewis obtained his M.B.A. degree in finance from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, where he was president of the Business Club. In 1967, Lewis enrolled in University of Michigan Law School earning his J.D. degree from there in 1970.

Lewis worked as a law clerk for the Honorable Theodore Levin of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan while teaching for the University of Michigan's African American Studies Department. In 1971, Lewis joined the law firm of Patmon, Young and Kirk Professional Corporation. He also served as an associate professor of law for the Detroit College of Law from 1972 to 1978. In 1972, Lewis, along with two other black lawyers, formed Lewis, White and Clay (now Lewis & Munday) – a professional corporation. Lewis served as president of the firm from 1972 to 1982 at which time he became chairman of the board. In 2001, Lewis & Munday ranked sixteenth nationally among all bond counsel and twentieth among all underwriter counsel firms in the country. Lewis served as a member of the State of Michigan Attorney Discipline Board from 1978 to 1983. He has also been a board member of the National Association of Bond Lawyers, the Institute of American Business, the National Association of Securities Professionals, Conrail, Inc., LG&E Corporation, Paradies Metro Ventures, Comerica, Inc., TRW, Inc., M.A. Hanna Company, Fife Electric Co., Lakefront Capitol Advisors, Inc., Lewis and Thompson Agency, Inc., the Detroit Edison Securitization Funding, LLC, Kroger Company, the Police Foundation and H&R Block.

Lewis has been a Fellow of the American Bar Association and a member of the board of trustees of Oakland University, and the Oakland University Foundation. Lewis was awarded honorary Doctor of Humane Letters

degrees from both the University of Detroit Mercy in 1991 and Central Michigan University in 2001. In 1995, he received the Learned Hand Award from the American Jewish Committee.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with David Baker Lewis was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 9, 2007 and October 26, 2012, in Detroit, Michigan, and was recorded on 8 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Bond lawyer David Baker Lewis (1944 - ) co-founded the law firm that became Lewis & Munday, LLC.

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## 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:

Lewis, David Baker, 1944-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Lewis, David Baker, 1944- --Interviews

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African American lawyers--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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## Occupations:

Bond Lawyer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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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 David Baker Lewis, March 9, 2007 and October 26, 2012. 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 David Baker Lewis, Section A2007\_081\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:38 ?

David Baker Lewis was born on June 9, 1944 in Detroit, Michigan to Dorothy Baker Lewis and Walton Adams Lewis. His maternal great-grandparents, Mary Baker and James Baker, owned a barber shop in Bay City, Michigan. Lewis' maternal grandfather, Oscar W. Baker, was crippled in a childhood railway accident. After he received a degree from the University of Michigan Law School in 1902, he successfully sued the party responsible for his injury. Lewis' maternal grandfather was also the chairman of the Freedmen's Aid Society, and founded the law firm of Baker, Baker and Selby in Bay City, where he met and married Lewis' maternal grandmother, Ida Harrison Baker. Lewis' paternal grandparents, George Adams and Emma Lewis, had four children. His paternal grandmother, a domestic, later remarried a minister, Peyton M. Lewis, and moved to Iowa. Lewis' parents met at Howard University, where his mother studied sociology. She later earned a master's degree at the University of Michigan, and became a social worker.

Railroad accidents--United States--History.

African American families--Michigan--Detroit.

Slavery--Michigan--Detroit.

Video Oral History Interview with David Baker Lewis, Section A2007\_081\_001\_002, TRT: 0:31:13 ?

David Baker Lewis' father, Walton Adams Lewis, received funding from the community of Waterloo, Iowa to attend Howard University, but left prematurely after the death of his stepfather, minister Peyton M. Lewis. He finished his degree in 1937 at Iowa State Teachers College in Cedar Falls. Lewis' parents first met at Howard University, and married years later in Detroit, Michigan, where his father worked in the employment department of Ford Motor Company. Lewis' father later became an insurance salesman; and, in 1942, founded the W.A. Lewis Insurance Agency in the black business district of Detroit. Lewis often accompanied his father while he collected premiums and delivered policies. He also describes his older half-brother, Robert Lewis' role at the insurance agency. Lewis grew up in the African American neighborhood of Conant Gardens near Detroit's 7 Mile Road, where his neighbors included Deputy Mayor Walter R. Greene, Jr. and pastor Malcolm G. Dade, Sr.

Insurance companies--Michigan--Detroit.

African Americans--Michigan--Detroit--History--20th century.

African American neighborhoods--Michigan--Detroit.

Video Oral History Interview with David Baker Lewis, Section A2007\_081\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:03 ?

David Baker Lewis attended the integrated Courville Elementary School in Detroit, Michigan; and, later, the integrated Nolan Junior High School, where he had both African American and white teachers. As a child, Lewis delivered Michigan Chronicle newspapers; was a member of the Boy Scouts of America; and attended Bethel A.M.E. church. In 1959, he enrolled at John J. Pershing High School, where he played on the football team, and won the public school championship. During Lewis' childhood, he and his father often drove across the border to have lunch at the Prince Edward Hotel in Windsor, Canada, as African Americans were not served in the restaurants of downtown Detroit. Lewis also experienced racial discrimination at a Polish-owned barber shop, where he was refused service. Upon graduating high school in 1962, Lewis aspired to play football at the University of Michigan. However, with the encouragement of his parents, he matriculated at Michigan State University-Oakland in Rochester instead.

Race discrimination--United States.

African Americans--Michigan--Newspapers.

Neighborhoods--Michigan--Detroit.

African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Michigan--Detroit.

African Americans--Education (Higher)--Michigan.

Video Oral History Interview with David Baker Lewis, Section A2007\_081\_002\_004, TRT: 4:30:03 ?

David Baker Lewis studied economics in the business administration program at Michigan State University-Oakland in Rochester, Michigan from 1962. He was influenced by professors Robin Hough, Frederick W. Obear and Walter S. Collins. In 1964, he spent the summer in Zurich, Switzerland, and lived with a Swiss family while working as an assistant at the Holderbank company. At his graduation in 1965, he was awarded the Alfred G. Wilson Award in honor of his outstanding academics. Lewis went to study finance at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business. There, he was elected president of the business club in his second year, and befriended accountant James Hill, Jr. He interned in the administrative department of Northern Trust Corporation, and was their sole African American trainee. Although Lewis received an offer to work at the Northern Trust Corporation upon his graduation, he applied to University of Michigan Law School in Ann Arbor, the alma mater of his maternal grandfather, and was accepted.

Video Oral History Interview with David Baker Lewis, Section A2007\_081\_002\_005, TRT: 5:30:37 ?

David Baker Lewis enrolled at the University of Michigan Law School in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1967. As one of twelve black students at a school with an all-white faculty, Lewis found guidance in the African American upperclassmen and the Black Law Students Association. He was also the only African American summer associate at the firm of Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC in 1969. At the University of Michigan, Lewis met his first wife, Kathleen McCree Lewis, who was an undergraduate student. They were involved in the university's Black Action Movement, which sought to increase black student enrollment and hire black faculty members. In 1970, Lewis participated in a Black Action Movement student strike that shut down the university for two days. He graduated that year, and clerked for Judge Theodore Levin. Lewis also remembers Cleveland Mayor Carl Stokes' election in 1967, and the memorial held on campus after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968.

Video Oral History Interview with David Baker Lewis, Section A2007\_081\_002\_006, TRT: 6:32:23 ?

David Baker Lewis secured a clerkship under Judge Theodore Levin in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan with the help of his father-in-law, Judge Wade H. McCree. In 1971, Lewis was offered a position at the large corporate firm of Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC, but instead joined the small minority firm of Patmon, Young and Kirk, PC in Detroit, Michigan. There, he represented such clients as Motown songwriters Holland-Dozier-Holland. In 1972, Lewis founded the firm of Lewis, White, and Clay, PC with Richard T. White and Eric Lee Clay, a former clerk for Judge Damon J. Keith. The firm retained Aetna Life and Casualty Company and the American Football League as clients. In 1973, Lewis was active in the election campaign of Detroit Mayor Coleman Young. Later, he litigated on behalf of the City of Detroit before the Michigan Supreme Court, and succeeded in keeping a Cadillac Motor

Car Division facility within the city.

Video Oral History Interview with David Baker Lewis, Section A2007\_081\_002\_007, TRT: 7:29:19 ?

David Baker Lewis engaged in public finance casework at his law firm, Lewis, White, and Clay, PC. On behalf of Mayor Coleman Young, Lewis wrote legislation for the expansion of Cobo Hall in Detroit, Michigan, and helped the city avoid \$20 million dollars in utility location costs. Lewis' law firm expanded to offices in New York City; Seattle, Washington; and Washington, D.C, where they succeeded in refinancing debt and closing bond transactions on behalf of the city government and Mayor Sharon Pratt. In 1989, Lewis joined the board of the Consolidated Rail Corporation, where he was tasked with reestablishing an efficient rail network in the northeastern United States. He served alongside Dean Wiley A. Branton, Sr. and Michigan's former Governor William G. Milliken, who later appointed Lewis as a trustee of Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. Lewis describes the role of corporate board members, and remembers Mayor Coleman Young's contributions to Detroit.

Video Oral History Interview with David Baker Lewis, Section A2007\_081\_002\_008, TRT: 8:28:26 ?

David Baker Lewis talks about notable figures from Detroit, Michigan, including Erma Henderson, the city's first black councilwoman; Richard Henry Austin, Michigan's first African American secretary of state; and Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown. He reflects upon his life and legacy, as well as his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He also talks about how his family's support contributed to his successful career. Lewis concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.