

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert Dale

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dale, Robert, 1943-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Robert Dale,
Dates:	February 18, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:28:56).
Abstract:	Advertising chief executive Robert Dale (1943 -) was the founder of R.J. Dale Advertising & Public Relations in Chicago, Illinois. The company has been ranked among the leading black owned agencies by Black Enterprise Magazine. Dale was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 18, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_017
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

CEO of R.J. Dale Advertising & Public Relations, Robert J. Dale was born on May 2, 1943 in Chicago, Illinois. As a child, he attended Chicago's St. Cyril Elementary School. After graduating from Chicago Vocational High School in 1961, Dale went on to serve in the United States Air Force. He was stationed in Amarillo, Texas and served as a member of the U.S. Air Force basketball team.

Dale married Oattie Andre' Bryant of Nashville, Tennessee in 1966 and then moved to Phoenix, Arizona and enrolled at Arizona State University where he pursued his B.S. degree in business and was elected president of the Black Student Union. There, he led efforts encouraging the administration to have cultural educational assistance and housing for black students. During this time, he was also elected student senator from the college of business. Dale continued his education by pursuing his M.B.A. at Stanford University. Then in 1973, Dale was hired as a local account executive at Kaiser Broadcasting in Chicago. He then was promoted to national account executive at Kaiser Spot Television Sales.

Dale co-founded R.J. Dale Advertising & Public Relations in 1979, with the hopes of bringing a unique business approach to African American advertising. Since its inception, R.J. Dale Advertising & Public Relations has been ranked among the leading black owned agencies by *Black Enterprise* Magazine. Its practice focused on general market and segment specific programs.

Dale has served on the boards of the Chicago State University College of Business, the Black Public Relations Society, the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, the Black Ensemble Theatre, the Association of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs and the Institute of Positive Education where he was elected board president.

Dale was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 18, 2008.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Robert Dale was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 18, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Advertising chief executive Robert Dale (1943 -) was the founder of R.J. Dale Advertising & Public Relations in Chicago, Illinois. The company has been ranked among the leading black owned agencies by Black Enterprise Magazine.

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:

Dale, Robert, 1943-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dale, Robert, 1943- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Advertising 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 Robert Dale, February 18, 2008. 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 Robert Dale, Section A2008_017_001_001, TRT: 0:28:49 ?

Robert Dale was born on May 2, 1943 in Chicago, Illinois. His mother, Jessie Dale, was born in 1919 in Memphis, Tennessee. Her family was originally from Greenwood, Mississippi. As a young adult, she migrated to Chicago where she worked in an uncle's store located near 45th Street and Vincennes Avenue. His father, Charles McDearmon, was also born in Tennessee in 1919. Despite owning property in Tennessee, Dale's paternal grandparents migrated to Chicago, where his grandfather worked in a steel mill. His father joined the U.S. Army and eventually returned to school, completing his undergraduate and

master's degrees. Dale's parents met in Chicago. He was raised by his mother and had a limited relationship with his father. He describes his likeness to his parents and his childhood neighborhood in Chicago. Dale and his older brother attended Corpus Christi Catholic Elementary School and St. Cyril Elementary School. He reflects upon his mother's financial sacrifice to send them to better schools.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Dale, Section A2008_017_001_002, TRT: 0:29:46 ?

Robert Dale attended Corpus Christi Catholic Elementary School before transferring to St. Cyril Elementary School in Chicago, Illinois. Although Dale was the top male student in his class, he was denied a scholarship to Chicago's Mount Carmel High School due to racism. He instead enrolled at Chicago Vocational School (CVS) where he lacked mentors, faced racial discrimination from his white peers, and became disengaged with his schoolwork. During his high school years, Dale's family did not actively discuss civil rights issues or events. After graduating near the bottom of his class in 1961, Dale began working for the Social Security Administration before entering the U.S. Air Force in 1962. During his four years in the military, Dale was stationed in Amarillo, Texas where he was assigned to the medical unit and became a dental assistant. After leaving the Air Force, Dale moved to Phoenix, Arizona with his wife and enrolled at Arizona State University with the support of Dr. Joseph Parham.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Dale, Section A2008_017_001_003, TRT: 0:31:08 ?

Robert Dale recalls his involvement with the Civil Rights Movement, his college and graduate education, and his entry into the business world. Dale describes his youth outreach in Chicago and his campus activism as a member of the Black Liberation Organizational Committee at the University of Arizona in Phoenix. His protests against discrimination by Mormons led to an invitation to Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah where Dale's initial impressions of racism were confirmed. Dale was recruited to the Stanford Graduate School of Business for his Masters' degrees in Business and Communications. While living in East Palo Alto, California, Dale taught an economics course at Nairobi Day School, which his son also attended. Upon graduating in 1973, he had difficulty finding work even though he was highly qualified. His first job at Kaiser Broadcasting Corporation entailed a training period and low salary that were atypical for M.B.A. degree-holders. Despite these barriers, Dale became one of their top salesmen.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Dale, Section A2008_017_001_004, TRT: 0:30:08 ?

Robert Dale talks about his decision to leave Kaiser Broadcasting Corporation after being passed over for promotions. He went into business for himself first with R. J. Dale Marketing Consultants, then later co-founding the agency Adworks in 1979. Dale recalls important figures of Chicago advertising including Vince Cullers. He recalls Cullers's profound impact in advertising positive images of black identity while offering opportunities for young black people in the industry. Despite such achievements, racism often limited the advancement of black-owned advertising agencies. Dale explains the need for black ad agencies and companies to partner with one another and the pitfalls companies face when trying to advertise for themselves. He reflects upon his identity as a businessman. He also describes R.J. Dale Advertising's successful bid to advertise the Illinois State Lottery and how that achievement was overshadowed by excessive auditing in response to a black-owned company obtaining such a major client.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Dale, Section A2008_017_001_005, TRT: 0:29:05 ?

Robert Dale reflects upon his life and his legacy. He details the political campaigns that R.J. Dale Advertising ran in Illinois and recounts how racial discrimination resulted in an unfair contract with the Illinois State Lottery. He expresses concerns for black-owned advertising agencies, which he sees in danger of being coopted by white agencies through the guise of multi-culturalism. However, he remains optimistic about the future of R.J. Dale Advertising and notes he would not do anything differently. He talks about his hopes and concerns for the African American community and advocates for African-centered Education as a solution for ongoing problems. In reflecting upon how he wants to be remembered, he describes his involvement with African-centered Schools and the Institute of Positive Education in Chicago, Illinois, the influence of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad on his life, and his family's careers and achievements.