

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with William Massey

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Massey, William A., 1956-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with William Massey,
Dates:	March 8, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:58:29).
Abstract:	Mathematician William Massey (1956 -) , co-founder of the Conference for African American Researchers in the Mathematical Sciences, became the first tenured African American mathematician at an Ivy League University when he was named Edwin S. Wilsey Professor of Operations, Research, and Financial Engineering at Princeton University. Massey was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 8, 2013, in Princeton, New Jersey. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_065
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Mathematician William A. Massey was born in 1956 in Jefferson City, Missouri; the younger of two sons of Richard A. Massey, Sr. and Juliette Massey. Massey attended the public schools of St. Louis, Missouri and high school in University City, a suburb of St. Louis. Upon graduating from University City High School, Massey received a Harvard Book Award and a National Achievement Scholarship. He enrolled at Princeton University in 1973 and encountered his first real introduction to research mathematics in an honor calculus course taught by the late Ralph Fox. Massey wrote his undergraduate senior thesis, "Galois Connections on Local Fields," under the direction of Bernard Dwork, and graduated from Princeton in 1977 with his A.B. degree in mathematics with honors – magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and Sigma Xi. Massey was then awarded a Bell Labs Cooperative Research Fellowship for minorities to attend graduate school in the department of mathematics at Stanford University. Massey wrote his doctoral theses, "Non-Stationary Ques," under the supervision of Joseph Keller, and graduated from Stanford University in 1981 with his Ph.D. degree in mathematics.

In 1981, Massey became a member of the technical staff in the Mathematical Sciences Research Center at Bell Laboratories, a division of Lucent Technologies. His research there included queuing theory, applied probability, stochastic processes, and the performance modeling of telecommunication systems. Massey published over fifty papers in those areas, one of which credits him as the co-author of a U.S. Patent on server staffing. In the area of mentoring, Massey has organized every annual Conference for African American Researchers in the Mathematical Sciences, which he co-founded in 1995. He founded the Council for African American Researchers in the Mathematical Sciences (1996) and is a lifetime member of the National Association of Mathematicians (NAM). In 2001, Massey was named the Edwin S. Wilsey Professor of Operations, Research, and Financial Engineering at Princeton University, making him the first tenured African American mathematician at an Ivy League University.

Massey received the Distinguished Service Award from NAM in 1996 and was invited to give its William W. S. Clayton Lecture. He has given invited lectures at the American Mathematical Society national conference, the Congreso Nacional de la Sociedad Matematica Mexicana, and the Edward Bouchet Conference for African and African American Physicists and Mathematicians that were held in Ghana, Canada, and Germany. The Blackwell-Tapia Prize Committee awarded Massey its 2006 prize and *U.S. Black Engineer and Technology* magazine honored Massey as the Black Engineer of the Year in 2008.

William A. Massey was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 8, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with William Massey was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 8, 2013, in Princeton, New Jersey, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Mathematician William Massey (1956 -) , co-founder of the Conference for African American Researchers in the Mathematical Sciences, became the first tenured African American mathematician at an Ivy League University when he was named Edwin S. Wilsey Professor of Operations, Research, and Financial Engineering at Princeton University.

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:

Massey, William A., 1956-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Massey, William A., 1956- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Princeton University. Dept. of Mathematics Bell Telephone Laboratories Conference for African-American Researchers in the Mathematical Sciences

Occupations:

Mathematician

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 William Massey, March 8, 2013. 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 William Massey, Section A2013_065_001_001, TRT: 1:29:03 ?

William Massey describes his family background. Massey's mother, Juliette McCauley, was born in 1923 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to a close-knit middle-class family. She attended Howard University, where she majored in home economics, and later taught at Texas Southern University. McCauley went on to earn her master's degree in home economics at Cornell University, and thereafter, began to teach at the collegiate level, at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. Massey's father, Richard Massey, was born around 1918 in South Carolina, and grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina. After serving in World War II, Richard Massey attended Lincoln University on the G.I. Bill, specializing in journalism and history. Massey's parents met at Lincoln University, and moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where they both worked as teachers, and raised their two sons. Massey describes his childhood in North St. Louis. He also describes his interest in creative construction projects and comic books.

Affirmative action programs.

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Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with William Massey, Section A2013_065_001_002, TRT: 2:35:34 ?

William Massey and his older brother grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, where their parents worked as teachers. Massey attended Field Branch school from kindergarten to third grade, followed by Scullin school for the fourth grade. He then transitioned into a gifted program at Walnut Park school, where he honed his skills in mathematics, and developed an interest in design and drawing. Massey describes his experience in the mixed-race school system in St. Louis. He also discusses his recollection of the political events of the 1960s, and the portrayal of science and black scientists on television.

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Video Oral History Interview with William Massey, Section A2013_065_001_003, TRT: 3:29:39 ?

William Massey attended University City High School in St. Louis, Missouri, where he received a solid preparation in mathematics, including coursework in trigonometry and calculus-based physics. While in high school, Massey participated in several math competitions, and was named a National Achievement Scholar. In the fall of 1973, Massey enrolled at Princeton University, and received his B.S. degree in mathematics in 1977. Massey describes the mentoring that he received from teachers in high school and at Princeton University. He also discusses the differences between the cultural environment in St. Louis and Princeton in the 1970s, and his experience at Princeton University.

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Video Oral History Interview with William Massey, Section A2013_065_001_004, TRT: 4:30:24 ?

William Massey attended Princeton University from 1973 to 1977, where he earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics. While at Princeton, he was most excited by his coursework in algebra, particularly abstract algebra. Under the direction of the late Bernard Dwork, Massey completed a senior thesis in algebraic number theory, titled 'Galois Connections on Local Fields'. He graduated magna cum laude, and went on to receive a Bell Cooperative Research Fellowship at Bell Labs in New Jersey. At Bell Labs, Massey was introduced to the application of mathematics to industrial research, and became acquainted with the field of queueing theory, which remains a focus of his research. Massey discusses the application of statistics in the media and politics. He also expresses his concerns regarding education and violence in the African American community.

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Video Oral History Interview with William Massey, Section A2013_065_001_005, TRT: 5:30:50 ?

After graduating from Princeton University in 1977, William Massey worked at Bell Labs for the summer, where he became aware of other African American scientists. The same year, he received a Bell Cooperative Research Fellowship to attend Stanford University to pursue his doctoral degree in mathematics. At Stanford, Massey was mentored by the prominent mathematician, Joseph Keller, and focused his dissertation research on non-stationary queueing theory. After receiving his Ph.D. degree in 1981, Massey returned to Bell Labs, where he continued his work in queueing theory and its applications in the telecommunications industry.

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Video Oral History Interview with William Massey, Section A2013_065_001_006, TRT: 6:32:08 ?

William Massey spent twenty years as a mathematics researcher at Bell Laboratories, where he contributed towards significant advancements in the area of queueing theory and its industrial applications. In 1995, Massey founded the Conference for African American Researchers in the Mathematical Sciences (CAARMS), which serves as a network for African American mathematicians, and provided a forum for mentoring African American students in the mathematical sciences. Over the course of his tenure at Bell Labs, Massey has mentored several students, including HistoryMaker, Arlie Petters. In 1997, he received the W. F. Lincoln-Hawkins Mentoring Excellence Award at Bell Labs.

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Video Oral History Interview with William Massey, Section A2013_065_001_007, TRT: 7:28:38 ?

After working at Bell Labs for twenty years, William Massey accepted the Edwin S. Wilsey Professor of Operations Research and Financial Engineering at Princeton University in 2001. At Princeton, Massey and his graduate students are focused on mathematical research in the areas of congestion pricing and decision-making processes. Massey is a member of the National Association of Mathematicians (NAM), the recipient of the 2008 Black Engineer of the Year Award, and a fellow of the American Mathematical Society (AMS) and the Institute for Operations Research and Managerial Sciences (INFORMS). Massey describes his research at Princeton University, and discusses the legacy of African American scientists who have trained and worked at Bell Labs.

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Video Oral History Interview with William Massey, Section A2013_065_001_008, TRT: 8:22:13 ?

Over the course of his career at Bell Labs and at Princeton University, William Massey has mentored several African American students in mathematics, who have gone on to prominent academic positions. Massey reflects upon the legacy of his research and mentorship contributions, and talks about how he would like to be remembered. He also describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community.

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