

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr.

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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>	Satcher, Robert Lee, Jr., 1965-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 3, 2014 and May 7, 2014
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2014
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:52:16).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Orthopedic surgeon, chemical engineer, and astronaut Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. (1965 - ) was a surgical oncologist and assistant professor at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. He became the first orthopedic surgeon in space during NASA's STS-129 mission. Satcher was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 3, 2014 and May 7, 2014, in Houston, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2014_047
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Orthopaedic surgeon, chemical engineer and astronaut Robert Lee Satcher, Jr. was born on September 22, 1965 in Hampton, Virginia to Robert and Marian Satcher. Satcher graduated from Denmark-Olar High School in Denmark, South Carolina, in 1982. He received his B.S. degree in chemical engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1986; his Ph.D. degree in chemical engineering from MIT in 1993; and his M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School in 1994. Satcher completed his postdoctoral research fellowships at MIT in 1994 and University of California, Berkeley in 1998; internship and residency in orthopaedic surgery at the University of California, San Francisco in 2000; and a fellowship in musculoskeletal oncology at the University of Florida in 2001.

From 2001 to 2008, Satcher served as an assistant professor at The Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University, in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. He was also an assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery at the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, Illinois from 2001 to 2008, and served as a professor at the Institute for Bionanotechnology in Medicine at Northwestern University Medical Center. In addition, Satcher was an attending physician of orthopaedic oncology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital - Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center from 2001 to 2008; and served as an assistant professor of biomedical engineering at Northwestern University from 2002 to 2008.

Satcher joined NASA in 2004. In 2009, he became the first orthopaedic surgeon in space during NASA's STS-129 mission, where he was a mission specialist and performed two spacewalks. Satcher left NASA in September 2011, and serves as a surgical oncologist and assistant professor at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Satcher's professional organizations include the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Musculoskeletal Tumor Society, American Academy of Cancer Research, Connective Tissue Oncology Society, National Medical

Association, Society of Black Academic Surgeons, Doctors United in Medical Missions, National Comprehensive Cancer Network, American Telemedicine Association, Orthopaedic Research Society, MIT Alumni Association, Black Alumni at MIT and Harvard Alumni Association. In addition, he co-founded the eHealth Research Institute, is a user panel member of the National Space Biomedical Research Institute, and serves on the boards of CSTEM and Teach for America.

Satcher has been active in numerous community organizations, including Big Brother for Youth at Risk Counseling Program, Department of Corrections, San Francisco, California; Tutor for Black Student's Union Tutorial Program, MIT; National Society of Black Engineers; American Institute of Chemical Engineering; Supervising Adult for Cub Scout Camp for Boys, Nashville, Tennessee; Open Airways Tutor (asthma awareness); Proctor for Freshman Dormitory at Harvard University; Lay Episcopal Minister at St. Edmund's Episcopal Church, Chicago, Illinois and at St. James Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. Satcher has also completed medical missions for outreach care to underserved areas in Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Gabon.

Satcher was a National Merit Scholar, and received the Monsanto Award and the Albert G. Hill Award from MIT, fellowships from both the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and UNCF/Merck Research department, and is a member of the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society. He has been awarded two honorary doctorates of science, and was selected as a finalist in Tuskegee University's presidency search in 2010.

Robert Satcher, Jr. was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 3, 2014.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 3, 2014 and May 7, 2014, in Houston, Texas, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Orthopedic surgeon, chemical engineer, and astronaut Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. (1965 - ) was a surgical oncologist and assistant professor at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. He became the first orthopedic surgeon in space during NASA's STS-129 mission.

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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:**

Satcher, Robert Lee, Jr., 1965-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Satcher, Robert Lee, Jr., 1965---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:**

Orthopedic Surgeon

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Chemical Engineer

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Astronaut

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

MedicalMakers|ScienceMakers

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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 Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., March 3, 2014 and May 7, 2014. 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 Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., Section A2014\_047\_001\_001, TRT: 1:27:19 ?

Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. was born on September 22, 1965 in Hampton, Virginia to Marian Hanna Satcher and Robert Satcher, Sr. His maternal grandparents, Annie-Lou Hanna and L.T. Hanna, raised nine children in Hobson City, Alabama. His grandfather worked as a butcher and served in World War II, while his grandmother worked in domestic service. Satcher's mother studied English at Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama. His paternal grandparents, Anna Curry Satcher and Wilmer Satcher, also had a family of nine children. They lived in Central City, Alabama, where they maintained a small farm. Satcher's father earned a bachelor's degree at Alabama State University, and later received a Ph.D. degree from Oregon State University. Satcher's parents met when his father was a college student and his mother was in high school, and they married after she received her bachelor's degree. Both sides of Satcher's family were active in the Civil Rights Movement, and participated in the Selma to Montgomery March.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., Section A2014\_047\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:51 ?

Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. began his education in Corvallis, Oregon, where his father, Robert Satcher, Sr., was a Ph.D. student at Oregon State University. After his father completed his degree, Satcher's family returned to Hampton, Virginia. His father became a professor at the Hampton Institute, and Satcher enrolled at the laboratory school on campus. He developed an interest in science, and assisted his father in the chemistry laboratory with his sister, Serena Satcher. Satcher went on to compete in national science competitions. He was encouraged by his teachers, who gave him extra assignments that allowed him to pursue his interests. In Hampton, Satcher's family lived near the Langley Air Force Base and the Patrick Henry Airport. Satcher enjoyed watching the planes land, and developed an interest in aviation. He went on to attend Spratley Junior High School in Hampton. After completing the eighth grade, he moved with his family to Denmark, South Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., Section A2014\_047\_001\_003, TRT:

3:28:34 ?

Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. moved with his family to Denmark, South Carolina, where his father, Robert Satcher, Sr., secured an administrative position at Voorhees College. Satcher enrolled at the predominantly black Denmark-Olar High School, where he took college preparatory courses, and excelled in math and science. During the summers, he worked as an engineering intern at the DuPont May Plant in Camden, South Carolina. Satcher received engineering scholarships from E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company and the National Merit Scholarship Program. After graduating one year early in 1982, he enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was initially intimidated by the competitive environment, and relied on the support of his peers at the MIT Black Students' Union. He also spent time with his maternal aunt and uncle, Peggy Hanna Jackson and Robert T. Jackson, Jr., who lived in western Massachusetts. Satcher went on to excel in his courses, including organic chemistry.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., Section A2014\_047\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:15 ?

Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts from 1982 to 1986. He lived near Boston, Massachusetts, where he was often subjected to racial insults and intimidation. The MIT community was predominantly white, and Satcher had only three black professors during his time there. Upon graduating in 1986, Satcher was admitted to the Harvard Medical School, and obtained permission to simultaneously begin a Ph.D. degree in chemical engineering at MIT. At Harvard Medical School, he studied under Dr. Alvin Poussaint and was involved in the Black Student Health Organization. At this point in the interview, Satcher reflects upon the cultural differences between the North and the South. He also remembers his peers from Harvard Medical School, including anesthesiologist Byron K. Edmond, spinal surgeon Daveed Frazier and otolaryngologist Walter Ralph, Jr. Additionally, Satcher talks about Guion Bluford, who became the first African American astronaut in 1983.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., Section A2014\_047\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:01 ?

Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. enrolled at Harvard Medical School in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1986. After two years, he began a Ph.D. degree in chemical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). There, he studied the relationship between blood flow and coronary artery disease. His research combined fluid mechanics with molecular biology, and contributed to the emerging field of biomedical engineering. After receiving his Ph.D. degree, Satcher completed his medical degree and began a residency at the University of California, San Francisco. There, he married his former MIT classmate, D'Juanna White Satcher, who was a pediatric resident in Oakland, California. Satcher also met biologist Emily Morey Holton, who worked for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) at the Ames Research Center. She introduced Satcher to her mentee, Scott Parazynski, who was a prospective astronaut. As a result of their conversations, Satcher began thinking seriously about becoming an astronaut.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., Section A2014\_047\_002\_006, TRT: 6:28:34 ?

Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. applied to become an astronaut with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the early 2000s. However, NASA stopped reviewing candidates after the Space Shuttle Columbia was

destroyed on reentry in 2003. In the meantime, Satcher worked as an orthopedic cancer surgeon at the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. In 2004, he received an invitation to participate in NASA's extensive screening and interview process. Satcher underwent a physical examination, a comprehensive psychological evaluation and performance testing. After review, he was accepted into the NASA Astronaut Corps and invited to begin training at their facilities. While deciding whether to accept the offer, Satcher consulted with his wife, D'Juanna White Satcher, and his paternal uncle, Dr. David Satcher, who served as the U.S. Surgeon General under President Bill Clinton. After a week of deliberation, Satcher left for basic training at Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., Section A2014\_047\_002\_007, TRT: 7:29:29 ?

Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. was a member of the NASA Astronaut Corps class of 2004. After basic training, he visited NASA facilities throughout the United States to study specialized areas of aeronautics. After completing the program, Satcher received full designation as an astronaut, and was placed on the waiting list for flight mission assignments. During this time, Satcher continued to develop the skills needed for flight missions. He learned to operate automatic, robotic and manual spacecraft, and completed Extravehicular Activity training. In 2008, Satcher was assigned to Space Transportation System 129 on the Space Shuttle Atlantis. His crewmates included Commander Charles Hobaugh, Nicole Stott, Barry Wilmore, Leland Melvin, Randolph Bresnik and Michael Foreman. Two weeks prior to launch in 2009, Satcher joined the crew at the John F. Kennedy Space Center in Merritt Island, Florida to review training activities and simulations. At this point, Satcher also talks about the support he received from his family.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr., Section A2014\_047\_002\_008, TRT: 8:30:13 ?

Dr. Robert Satcher, Jr. was assigned to Space Transportation System 129 (STS-129) on the Space Shuttle Atlantis, which launched on November 16, 2009. Satcher served as a mission specialist, and was assigned to the middeck of the shuttle with astronaut Michael Foreman. During the flight, Satcher and Foreman monitored their assigned flight systems until day three, when they reached the International Space Station (ISS) and prepared for docking. The crew successfully docked into the ISS, where fellow astronaut Nicole Stott had been stationed for two months. On day four, Satcher and Foreman completed their first spacewalk of the mission, where they were tasked with maintenance and repair work on the outside of the ISS. Satcher also describes the launch into space and the process of acclimating to zero gravity. He talks about daily life on the ISS, and concludes this part of the interview by outlining the STS-129 mission schedule.