

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Donald Hudson

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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>	Hudson, Donald Edward, 1929-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Donald Hudson,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 12, 2014
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2014
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:24:56).
<b>Abstract:</b>	College football coach Donald Hudson (1929 - 2018 ) served as the head football coach of Macalester College from 1971. He was the first African American head coach at a predominantly white university in the modern NCAA era. Hudson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 12, 2014, in Charlotte, North Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2014_185
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

High school and college football coach and athletic director Donald Edward Hudson was born on November 20, 1929, and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Westinghouse High School in Pittsburgh, where he participated in football and gymnastics. He went on to play football at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, where, in 1953, he received his B.S. degree in physical education and commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army Engineers.

Hudson served his military obligation at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri as a platoon leader for the first eight weeks of basic training. He then spent the next year and a half on the DMZ in Korea, where he served as a first lieutenant platoon leader. After military service, he earned his M.Ed. degree from Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Hudson first worked at Lincoln University in the 1950s and 1960s, where he taught in the Health and Physical Education Department and was an assistant football coach, assistant basketball coach, assistant track coach and head golf coach. In 1968, he became the State of Minnesota's first African American high school head football coach when he was hired at Central High School in Minneapolis.

In December of 1971, Hudson was appointed head football coach of Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, becoming the first African American head football coach at a predominantly white university in the United States in the modern NCAA era. He also served as assistant chairman of the Department of Physical Education and as the men's head track coach. While at Macalester, he testified before the U.S. Congress on behalf of the NCAA National Summer Youth Program, which he also directed for six years.

Hudson left Macalester College in 1975 and returned to Lincoln University in 1976, where he served as head football coach, head girls track coach, and athletic director for three years. He was later hired as athletic director of Smoky Hill High School in the Colorado Cherry Creek school district, where he worked until 2000.

Hudson was honored for his accomplishments during the half time of a Macalester football game on October 6, 2007. The mayor of St. Paul, Minnesota declared that day “Don Hudson Day” and Hudson was given the keys to the city. In addition, the football offices at Macalester College have been named after Hudson.

Hudson and his wife, Constance, reside in Charlotte, North Carolina. They have six children, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Donald Hudson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 12, 2014.

Hudson passed away on September 30, 2018.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Donald Hudson was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 12, 2014, in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. College football coach Donald Hudson (1929 - 2018 ) served as the head football coach of Macalester College from 1971. He was the first African American head coach at a predominantly white university in the modern NCAA era.

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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:

Hudson, Donald Edward, 1929-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Hudson, Donald Edward, 1929---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:

College Football Coach

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

SportsMakers

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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 Donald Hudson, August 12, 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 Donald Hudson, Section A2014\_185\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:13 ?

Donald Hudson was born on November 20, 1929 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Alice Nelson Hudson and George Hudson. Hudson's maternal grandparents, Lavinia Sorrell Nelson and George Nelson, moved from Maryland to Pittsburgh, where they opened a tailor shop that employed their family during the Great Depression. Hudson's maternal family was also musically talented, and performed as a band at their church. Hudson's father came to Pittsburgh from Alabama when he was a teenager. He enrolled at Westinghouse High School, where he met Hudson's mother. He was recruited into Hudson's maternal grandfather's band, and later became a barber. Hudson's mother graduated from Westinghouse High School, and studied at the Pittsburgh Musical Institute alongside many of her relatives. Hudson was raised in Pittsburgh's Homewood neighborhood. He worked in his family's tailor shop, and learned to play trumpet in their band. Hudson's mother also taught him to swim, and he became a lifeguard at a local high school.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Hudson, Section A2014\_185\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:00 ?

Donald Hudson met the Green Bay Packers' split end, Don Hutson, when he was a small child. From that time, Hudson aspired to play football, and practiced catching and throwing on a daily basis. He was raised by his mother, Alice Nelson Hudson, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, while his father, trumpeter George Hudson, toured with the George Hudson Orchestra. Hudson attended Belmar Elementary School and Baxter Junior High School, and played on an amateur football team with his friends. One of his classmates was pianist Ahmad Jamal, who later performed in the George Hudson Orchestra. Hudson went on to attend Westinghouse High School, where he joined the swim team and the football team. During his senior year, he threw seven touchdown passes as the school's quarterback, and led the team to win the city championship. However, the newspaper named his white teammate as Pittsburgh's all-star passer. During the summers, Hudson taught swimming and diving lessons at South Park High School in South Park, Pennsylvania.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Hudson, Section A2014\_185\_001\_003, TRT: 3:31:05 ?

Donald Hudson played football under Coach Peter P. Dimperio, Jr. at Westinghouse High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His mother, Alice Nelson Hudson, sent him to football clinics to learn about strategy. Upon graduating from high school, Hudson was recruited as a quarterback by Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. He was rarely allowed to play because his small stature, and instead he became known for his knowledge of strategy, which he taught to Lincoln University's Coach Ray Kemp. Hudson also attended national football clinics with his friend, Bill Myles, who later became an assistant football coach at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. During this time, Hudson joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and enlisted in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. Because of his size and race, he was barred from flight training and diver training. Instead, he was sent to Korea's demilitarized zone by a racist superior officer.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Hudson, Section A2014\_185\_001\_004, TRT: 4:26:50 ?

Donald Hudson served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He was a platoon leader in the demilitarized zone between North Korea and South Korea. Hudson was banned from playing in the U.S. military football league because of

his rank as a lieutenant, but was eventually recruited by a captain to serve as U.S. Army team's quarterback, and defeated the U.S. Marines in several games. After being discharged from the U.S. Army, Hudson returned to Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri as an assistant football coach. He also began a master's degree program at Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts, and received his degree in 1959. During his service in Korea, Lincoln University's football recruitment decreased, so Hudson implemented programs to attract talented high school football players to the college. Lincoln University played against teams like Grambling College and Southern University, and won five out of nine games during Hudson's first year as assistant coach.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Hudson, Section A2014\_185\_001\_005, TRT: 5:28:48 ?

Donald Hudson became the first African American head football coach at Minneapolis Central High School in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1968. He learned about the opening from fellow coach Donald "Bill" McMoore. After he was hired, all of the assistant coaches quit their positions. To replace them, Hudson hired an alumnus of the school named Eric Eversley and a U.S. Army veteran. He also rehired a few of the coaches who quit, and allowed one of the senior players to coach the sophomore team. Hudson also served as a track coach, swim coach and choir director during his time at Minneapolis Central High School. In 1971, Hudson was offered an assistant coaching position at Macalester College of St. Paul, Minnesota, and began recruiting black players from Minnesota's high schools. In response, he was harassed by the white high school coaches and majority-white crowds at games. Hudson also served as an associate professor of physical education and the assistant chairman of the physical education department.