

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Noel Mayo

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Mayo, Noel, 1937-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Noel Mayo,
Dates:	September 5, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:29:50).
Abstract:	Industrial designer and design professor Noel Mayo (1937 -) is the owner and president of Noel Mayo Associates, Inc., the first African American industrial design firm in the United States. Mayo was also the first African American to receive a B.S.degree in industrial design. Mayo was instrumental in establishing various mentoring programs for minorities. Mayo was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 5, 2002, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_186
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Philadelphia native industrial designer Noel Mayo is the owner and president of Noel Mayo Associates, Inc., the first African American industrial design firm in the United States, whose clients include NASA, IBM, the Department of Commerce and Agriculture, Black and Decker, the Museum of American Jewish History and the Philadelphia International Airport.

Mayo was the first black graduate to receive a B.S. degree in Industrial Design from the Philadelphia College of Art in 1960. He later became chairperson of this department, making him the first African American chairperson of an industrial design program in the United States. He held that post for eleven years and was awarded an honorary D.F.A. degree from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1981.

Mayo has been a regularly published writer magazines and journals such as *Innovation*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Minority Business Journal*. He has been a speaker at various international design symposiums and serves on the boards of numerous professional organizations. He was named the Ohio Eminent Scholar in Art and Design Technology in 1989 at Ohio State University where he taught product, interior and graphic design. Noel advocates alternative methods for education, accelerated learning and information distribution using new technologies and has a personal interest in developing synergistic learning products that include music, color, light and psychology. He has been instrumental in establishing various mentoring programs for minorities and establishing a directory of minority professionals in industrial, graphic, interior and architectural design.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Noel Mayo was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 5, 2002, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Industrial designer and design professor Noel Mayo (1937 -) is the owner and president of Noel Mayo Associates, Inc., the first African American industrial design firm in the United States. Mayo was also the first African American to receive a B.S.degree in industrial design. Mayo was instrumental in establishing various mentoring programs for minorities.

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:

Mayo, Noel, 1937-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Mayo, Noel, 1937---Interviews

Industrial designers--Interviews

African American college teachers--Ohio--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Ohio State University

Occupations:

Industrial Designer

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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 Noel Mayo, September 5, 2002. 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 Noel Mayo, Section A2002_186_001_001, TRT: 0:29:40 ?
Noel Mayo describes his family background. He was born on December 30,

1937 to Noel and Blanche Mayo in Orange, New Jersey. Mayo's parents were both from Georgia. His maternal grandparents, Daisy and Carson Bryant were artists. Mayo's father was a UPS worker and janitor. As a youth, Mayo often stayed with relatives due to his father's job and his mother's manic depression and her hospitalization. In middle school, Mayo attended boarding school at Sunnycrest Farm for Negro Boys in Cheney, Pennsylvania. Mayo had developed an early affinity for drawing and in high school, he worked for an art store. The store owner gave Mayo unlimited access to art books, and through this Mayo discovered the field of industrial design. He then received a bachelor's degree in industrial design from the Philadelphia College of Art in 1960. Mayo's design firm, Noel Mayo Associates, Inc. has done exhibits all over the world. Mayo describes his design philosophy and his long-standing partnership with Lutron Electronics for whom Mayo designed dimmer controls.

Industrial designers--Interviews.

African American college teachers--Ohio--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Noel Mayo, Section A2002_186_001_002, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Noel Mayo describes different aspects of industrial design and the importance of functional aesthetics. Mayo is a member of the Organization of Black Designers (OBD) which was founded by David Rice. The organization has given black designers an unprecedented opportunity to network with colleagues around the world. Mayo's own professional training was largely influenced by the Bauhaus School, but he would like to see a greater diversity of aesthetic and creativity. An advocate of cultural diversity in the design world, Mayo developed an exhibit showcasing the work of black designers. He describes his experience with racial discrimination as an African American in the design business, and he has great respect for HistoryMaker Charles Harrison, an industrial designer who became the head designer at Sears, Roebuck and Company. Mayo talks about the components of logo design, historically effective logos, a design challenge, his design process, and his own aesthetic.

Video Oral History Interview with Noel Mayo, Section A2002_186_001_003, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Noel Mayo describes challenges facing minority designers in winning clients as well as the psychology of color and typeface. As an industrial designer, Mayo is keen to explore new manufacturing techniques. Mayo shares the ongoing impact of design contributions by African Americans like Elijah McCoy who invented the shoe lasting machine, and Kan Matzeliger, the inventor of the automatic lubricating cup. He reflects upon his legacy, his hopes and concerns for the black community, and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Noel Mayo, Section A2002_186_Mayo_Noel_06_MED_001, TRT: