

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Howard Brown, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Brown, Howard, Jr., 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Howard Brown, Jr.,
Dates:	August 13, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:34:58).
Abstract:	Investment chief executive Howard Brown, Jr. (1945 -) is the cofounder, chairman and CEO of Greystone Community Reinvestment Associates and is the former deputy banking commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Banking. Brown was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 13, 2003, in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_184
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Financier and civil servant Howard Brown, Jr., was born in Eutaw, Alabama, on September 4, 1945, but at an early age he moved with his family to Atlanta. His mother, Bertha, was a teacher, and his father, Howard Brown, Sr., was a bulldozing contractor. After earning his early and high school education in Atlanta, he remained in town, attending Morehouse College and earning his B.A. in 1970. From there he went on to attend the University of Connecticut School of Law, graduating in 1973.

After finishing law school, Brown went to work for the Hartford Insurance Group, rising to associate counsel before he left in 1978. From 1978 to 1981, Brown served as the chief operations officer of O'Sullivan Fuel Oil, where he presided over the expansion of the business. Brown moved into the public sector in 1982, taking a position with the Connecticut Department of Banking, where he headed the legal staff, and by 1985 he was the banking commissioner. While in this role, he became chairman of the National Federal Legislation Committee of the Conference of State Bank Supervisors and was called upon to testify before various committees of the federal government. Brown returned to the private sector in 1992, as the vice president of public finance for Kidder, Peabody & Co. in New York. In 1995, Brown co-founded Greystone Community Reinvestment Associates and is currently the company's chairman and CEO. Greystone structures affordable housing mortgages that are backed by investment securities.

Brown is a founding member of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Securities Professionals and has served on the board of directors of the University of Connecticut School of Law Foundation, the Metropolitan YMCA, the Mark Twain House and the Connecticut Advisory Board to BankBoston Development Company. He is listed in *Who's Who in Government Service* and has received the Achievement Award as Outstanding Role Model in the Hartford Community. Brown and his wife, Elizabeth, reside in Connecticut.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Howard Brown, Jr. was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on August 13, 2003, in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Investment chief executive Howard Brown, Jr. (1945 -) is the cofounder, chairman and CEO of Greystone Community Reinvestment Associates and is the former deputy banking commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Banking.

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:

Brown, Howard, Jr., 1945-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brown, Howard, Jr., 1945---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Investment Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Howard Brown, Jr., August 13, 2003. 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 Howard Brown, Jr., Section A2003_184_001_001, TRT: 0:30:40 ?

Howard Brown, Jr. was born on September 4, 1945 in Eutaw, Alabama to Howard Barley Brown, Sr. and Bertha Means Brown. Bertha was born in Eutaw, Alabama on April 3, 1920. As a teacher, she emphasized education and had a clear idea of what she wanted for her children. She and Brown Sr. eventually divorced and she later married a man named Banks and moved to Hartford, Connecticut. Howard Barley Brown, Sr. was born in Eutaw, Alabama on January 19, 1915. After serving in World War II, he became a cattle rancher and

businessman. Though Brown grew up in a small southern town, his parents shielded him from segregation: refusing to allow him to use segregated facilities and eventually sending him to Atlanta, Georgia for a better education. Brown describes growing up in rural Alabama, his earliest childhood memories, family holiday celebrations, and his inquisitive childhood personality. Brown also talks about attending school in Eutaw and the teachers who influenced him there.

Video Oral History Interview with Howard Brown, Jr., Section A2003_184_001_002, TRT: 0:11:14 ?

Howard Brown, Jr. and his sister left their hometown of Eutaw, Alabama as teenagers to attend school in Atlanta, Georgia. In Atlanta, they lived with an aunt and uncle, Willie and Robert Allen, and attended Henry McNeal Turner High School, where Brown played in the band. Brown was enamored with the freedoms he experienced in Atlanta and with the black community there. Brown also talks about the prominent African American leaders in Atlanta in the early 1960s including, Reverend Samuel Woodrow Williams, Reverend William Holmes Borders, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Maynard Jackson, Julian Bond, and Benjamin E. Mays.

Video Oral History Interview with Howard Brown, Jr., Section A2003_184_001_003, TRT: 0:31:14 ?

Howard Brown, Jr. talks about being a teenager in Atlanta, Georgia and his education at Morehouse College and the University of Connecticut School of Law. Brown remembers attending recruitment parties for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the early 1960s and the civil rights leaders he saw as role models. In high school at Henry McNeal Turner High School, Brown was played baritone saxophone and played football for a brief period. After graduating, Brown attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia where he was influenced by Dr. Benjamin E. Mays and Dean Brailsford Reese Brazil. When his parents divorced in 1965, Brown withdrew from Morehouse and joined the United States Air Force where he was stationed in Japan and Thailand. Discharged in 1968, Brown returned to Morehouse to complete his degree and then moved to Hartford, Connecticut to attend the University of Connecticut School of Law. In 1973, Brown began to work at The Hartford Insurance Group as one of their first black lawyers.

Video Oral History Interview with Howard Brown, Jr., Section A2003_184_001_004, TRT: 0:31:15 ?

Howard Brown, Jr. discusses his career. After graduating from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1973, Brown was part of the first wave of African Americans to begin working in corporate law. Brown first worked for several years in the legal department at The Hartford Insurance Group. Fearing he would not be able to move beyond his current position, Brown left The Hartford in 1978 to become the chief operations officer and counsel for O'Sullivan Oil Fuel, Inc. After successfully supervising the company's expansion, Brown left O'Sullivan and, in 1982, became the deputy banking commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Banking. Brown also describes the political powers in Hartford, Connecticut in the early 1980s as well as explaining the relationship between Hartford and its suburbs.

Video Oral History Interview with Howard Brown, Jr., Section A2003_184_001_005, TRT: 0:30:07 ?

Howard Brown, Jr. discusses his banking career. Brown became deputy banking commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Banking in 1982, at a time when significant changes were going on within the banking industry, particularly with regard to federal regulations and the Community Reinvestment

Act of 1977. In 1985, Brown became the first African American to serve as the banking commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Banking. In this position, Brown again dealt with issues surrounding the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 as well as resistance to the idea of interstate banking, a concept he supported. When Governor William A. O'Neill decided not to run for reelection in 1990, Brown decided he should move on as well and in 1991 he became Vice President of Public Finance for Kidder, Peabody & Co., an investment banking group. Brown left Kidder Peabody in 1994 when it was sold to Paine Webber and Company. It was at this point that Brown decided to start his own asset management company, Greystone Group.

Video Oral History Interview with Howard Brown, Jr., Section A2003_184_001_006, TRT: 0:20:28 ?

Howard Brown, Jr. reflects upon the banking industry and its connection to African American communities. Brown sees potential opportunities within the minority mortgage market and says banks need to propel black businesses into greater and more viable enterprises. He also believes black communities would benefit from the Community Reinvestment Act being applied beyond banks to securities and the insurance industry. Brown reflects upon his own future plans and says he would absolutely encourage young African Americans to enter the banking industry. Brown believes he is still creating his legacy, but would like to be remembered as someone who dealt forthrightly with issues and people and who was willing to work hard to make things happen.