

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Leigh Jones

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jones, Leigh, 1944-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Leigh Jones,
Dates:	July 19, 2004 and September 15, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:22:11).
Abstract:	Hairstylist Leigh Jones (1944 -) is one of Chicago's premiere stylists. In 1962, Jones enrolled in the American School of Beauty Culture as one of the first black students. He graduated with his license in 1964. He worked for a number of exclusive salons before opening his own salon in 1983. During this period, he was also the stylist for television's AM Chicago and then host, Oprah Winfrey. Jones was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 19, 2004 and September 15, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_097
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Hairstylist and salon owner Leigh Jones was born December 22, 1944, in Kansas City, Kansas. When Jones was four years old, his father died, and his mother moved the family to Chicago, Illinois. In Chicago, Jones attended Frank L. Gillespie Technology and Magnet Cluster, Park Manor Elementary School, Saint Columbanus School, and Charles S. Deneen Elementary School. His uncle owned Jimmy's Restaurant on 63rd Street, where Jones enjoyed listening to the older people tell stories. He graduated from Westcott Vocational High School (now Simeon Vocational) in 1960. Jones attended the University of Illinois at Chicago, Roosevelt University and Loop College before enrolling in the American School of Beauty Culture in 1962. He was one of the first black students to attend the school, and was influenced by Bernice Van Dessel. Jones graduated from the American School of Beauty Culture and was licensed in 1964. He also attended Revlon Color Institute, the L'Oreal Institute, Pivot Point International, Clairol Color Academy, and the Southern Illinois School of Continuing Education.

In 1963, Jones became the first African American to work for Jean Luc Vercammen; he began working at Carrie's Chateau and at Frederick Glasser's Cheers and Shears Salon in 1964. During his career, he worked with Darrell Whitten, Inc., Maximo Salon and Jean Pierre Salon before opening his own salon in 1983. During this period, he was also the stylist for A. M. Chicago host, Oprah Winfrey. Jones became the hairstylist of choice for many well known clients including Lainie Kazan, Lena Horne, Eunice Johnson, Dori Wilson, Heather Bilandic, Beverly Crown, Diahann Carroll, Natalie Cole, Marlo Thomas, Barbara Eden, Billy Dee Williams, Debra Norville, Phyllis Newman, and Essie Kupcinet. He is known for treating all of his clients with the same high standard of courtesy.

Jones has been a commercial hairstylist for Johnson Products, Alberto-Culver, Helene Curtis, Revlon and Clairol, as well as for television specials and Broadway shows. He is the chair and judge of the Gold Trophy and Silver Shopping Competition for the Midwest Beauty Show; he is also a board member of the Chicago Cosmetologist

Association, Mid-American Art Association, Bike and Hike for Multiple Sclerosis, and the 10th Annual Chicago House Benefit for AIDS. Living near many of his clients in Chicago's Gold Coast, Jones enjoys the positive feedback he gets from his work and watching football. Leigh Jones was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 15, 2004.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Leigh Jones was conducted by Larry Crowe and Scott Stearns on July 19, 2004 and September 15, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Hairstylist Leigh Jones (1944 -) is one of Chicago's premiere stylists. In 1962, Jones enrolled in the American School of Beauty Culture as one of the first black students. He graduated with his license in 1964. He worked for a number of exclusive salons before opening his own salon in 1983. During this period, he was also the stylist for television's AM Chicago and then host, Oprah Winfrey.

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:

Jones, Leigh, 1944-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Interviewer)

Adams, Frederick (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Jones, Leigh, 1944---Interviews

African American beauty operators--Interviews.

African American entrepreneurs.

African American entrepreneurs--Interview.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Hair Stylist

HistoryMakers® Category:

StyleMakers

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 Leigh Jones, July 19, 2004 and September 15, 2004. 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 Leigh Jones, Section A2004_097_001_001, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Sonia Gollance: Jones talks about his parents, including helping his mother after she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and about moving to Chicago with his immediate family to live with his aunt and uncle after his father's death when Jones was four. He narrates living on the South Side of Chicago and working in the family restaurant.

African American families--Illinois--Chicago.

Breast--Cancer--Patients--Family relationships.

Single-parent families.

Video Oral History Interview with Leigh Jones, Section A2004_097_001_002, TRT: 0:31:15 ?

Leigh Jones discusses his early childhood. He remembers being a very inquisitive child, and his Aunt Annabel, who encouraged him to be artistic. Jones describes the gang activity he saw during school, and states that he did not participate in gang activity because he spent his summers with his grandparents. Jones also recalls his relationship with his younger brother, and the guilt he felt when his brother was drafted instead of him. Jones attended a predominantly white vocational high school; he does not remember any racial tension, although he does remember the racism that occurred within the stylist world.

African American high school students--Vocational education.

Beauty culture--Social conditions.

Draft--United States.

Juvenile delinquency.

Video Oral History Interview with Leigh Jones, Section A2004_097_001_003, TRT: 0:30:35 ?

Leigh Jones mentions the importance role music and dance played in his childhood. He enjoyed playing the piano and the organ as a child, but he could not play in church because his style was jazzy. Jones elaborates on the significant role the church played in his family, and how his pastor was a father figure to him. Jones also discusses his college experiences and attending the American School of Beauty Culture.

Beauty culture--Study and teaching.

African American churches--Illinois--Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Leigh Jones, Section A2004_097_001_004, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Leigh Jones remembers the beginning of his career, when he worked as an assistant to Jean-Luc Vercammen. Jones recalls attending different seminars at L'Oreal and Revlon, where he learned how to do problem hair color and met models. Jones also worked for Frederick Glazer in the Gold Coast of Chicago. He recalls the measures that he had to undertake in order to protect himself against false accusations from Glazer's white female clients.

Beauty culture--Study and teaching.

Integration.

Video Oral History Interview with Leigh Jones, Section A2004_097_001_005, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Leigh Jones remembers being a stylist on "A.M. Chicago," and styling Oprah Winfrey's hair. Jones reflects on the racism he saw in different salons and discusses the social roles of hairdressers, barbers, and hairstylists. Jones discusses the differing expectations of stylists in Europe and the United States. He also considers the relationships he developed with his clients. Jones reminisces about being a pioneer in blowing out hair influential role pop culture plays in his field.

Beauty culture--Vocational guidance.

Hairdressing.

Beauty culture--Social aspects.

Winfrey, Oprah.

Video Oral History Interview with Leigh Jones, Section A2004_097_001_006, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Leigh Jones talks about traveling with different clients and the personal friendships he developed with them. He remembers always being prepared if he needed to accompany one of his clients to an event at the last minute. Jones mentions that his clientele was often coveted by rival stylists. Jones states that the most fulfilling part of his job is making women pretty; he also discusses the African American hair industry in comparison to the white hair industry.

Hairdressing of African Americans.

Hair preparations industry--United States.

Competition.

Video Oral History Interview with Leigh Jones, Section A2004_097_002_007, TRT: 0:20:21 ?

Leigh Jones shares some personal and professional photographs.