

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert Goodwin

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Goodwin, Robert (Robert K.)
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Robert Goodwin,
Dates:	August 26, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:20:18).
Abstract:	Foundation chief executive Robert Goodwin (1948 -) served the George H.W. Bush Administration, working on the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges. Goodwin went on to serve as president and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation for over fifteen years. Goodwin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 26, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_148
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Robert Kerr Goodwin was born on November 15, 1948, in Tulsa, Oklahoma; his mother was a teacher and social worker, and his father was a business owner and attorney. At the age of fifteen, Goodwin became a licensed preacher and planned to pursue a career in the ministry; in 1966 he earned his high school diploma from Bishop Kelley Catholic School where he worked on the school paper, was a member of the student government, year book, and chess clubs, and was the first black student body president.

From 1966 until 1970, Goodwin attended Oral Roberts University, where he earned his B.A. degree. At Oral Roberts University, Goodwin was a member of the student ministering team and traveled around the world preaching. In 1973, Goodwin earned his M.A. degree in philosophy from San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Upon completing his master's degree, Goodwin was summoned back to Tulsa by his father to run the family-owned newspaper, *The Oklahoma Eagle*. Goodwin operated the paper until 1981; during his tenure he increased the readership and converted the printing to a more efficient, cost effective process. Between 1981 and 1985, Goodwin sold encyclopedias in Texas, accumulating a million dollars in sales in a five-year period. From 1985 until 1989, Goodwin worked as a printing consultant, lobbyist, director of public affairs, and associate vice president for university relations at Prairie View and Texas A&M Universities. While working at Texas A&M, Goodwin led the Democrats for Bush campaign. Goodwin's activities caught the attention of the Bush Administration and he was offered a position with the Department of Education working on the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges, a position he held from 1989 until 1992. In 1992, Goodwin was hired as the executive vice president of the Points of Light Foundation, an organization responsible for assisting and encouraging citizens to engage in volunteer service; he went on to serve as president and CEO of the organization. In 2007, Goodwin announced his retirement from the Points of Light Foundation, after over fifteen years of service.

For his civic and community achievements, Goodwin received numerous awards and honors.

Goodwin was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 26, 2004.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Robert Goodwin was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on August 26, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Foundation chief executive Robert Goodwin (1948 -) served the George H.W. Bush Administration, working on the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges. Goodwin went on to serve as president and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation for over fifteen years.

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:

Goodwin, Robert (Robert K.)

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Goodwin, Robert (Robert K.)--Interviews

African American civic leaders--Interviews

Endowments--Officials and employees--United States--Interviews

African American executives--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Points of Light Foundation

Occupations:

Nonprofit Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Robert Goodwin, August 26, 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 Robert Goodwin, Section A2004_148_001_001, TRT: 0:29:14 ?

Robert Goodwin was born on November 15, 1948 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His mother, Jeanne Osby Goodwin, was born and raised in Springfield, Illinois. She attended college in Nashville, Tennessee; while there, she met Goodwin's father, Edward Goodwin, who was a football player at Fisk University. His father earned his degree in education and returned to Tulsa where he became an entrepreneur and later a newspaper publisher. Goodwin's parents married while his mother was engaged to another man, then settled in Tulsa. She worked as a schoolteacher and taught Goodwin to strive for excellence. Goodwin visited his maternal grandmother in Springfield occasionally as a child. His paternal grandfather was a respected businessman in Tulsa with real estate interests and a funeral home. He was able to pass as white, which he used to his advantage. When Goodwin was one year old, his family moved fifteen miles outside of Tulsa where his parents often hosted prominent African American visitors and Goodwin and his siblings grew up.

African American civic leaders--Interviews.

Endowments--Officials and employees--United States--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Goodwin, Section A2004_148_001_002, TRT: 0:30:15 ?

Robert Goodwin grew up in Alsuma, Oklahoma just outside of Tulsa. As a child, he anticipated the annual Christmas viewing of 'It's a Wonderful Life' and opening presents, and Fourth of July celebrations when his father grilled raccoons and possums. Goodwin grew up with seven siblings. Their childhood was idyllic with regular chores, church, hiking, and building treehouses. Goodwin hoped to become a minister of his church in Alsuma, Oklahoma from an early age. He attended Alsuma School, a two-room schoolhouse in Alsuma, where his mother taught. As a junior high schooler, Goodwin played the trumpet. He enrolled at Union High School, before transferring to the Catholic Bishop Kelley High School as a sophomore. In his freshman year, he was discriminated against while on a trip with his high school band. Upon transferring to Bishop Kelley, he was one of very few black, non-Catholic students. He sought acceptance by participating in student government, a trend he would continue through college.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Goodwin, Section A2004_148_001_003, TRT: 0:31:13 ?

Robert Goodwin transferred to Bishop Kelley High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma where most of the students were white and Catholic and had known each other since childhood. Goodwin started the chess club his sophomore year and decided to run for student body president against two popular candidates. He was elected after delivering a compelling election speech and winning the support of the more numerous less popular students. Goodwin graduated in 1966 and enrolled at the newly established Oral Roberts University in Tulsa where he was again, one of a handful of black students. He became acquainted with the founder, Oral Roberts and felt his spiritual life enriched. After graduating in 1970, he entered the University of Tulsa but left before completing his master's degree. He then enrolled at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California and

earned his M.A. in 1972, just as he was summoned back to Oklahoma to take over the family newspaper business, The Oklahoma Eagle.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Goodwin, Section A2004_148_001_004, TRT: 0:29:22 ?

Robert Goodwin began running his father's newspaper, The Oklahoma Eagle, when he was twenty-three years old. During his ten-year tenure, Goodwin focused on increasing revenue by using the paper's press to print other publications, such as tabloids. Goodwin moved to Texas for a fresh start and began selling encyclopedias. Over the course of five years, he sold a million copies. In 1986, he was hired at Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical University as a consultant for converting their hot type printing to cold type technology. He became director of public information before working for the chancellor of the A&M system to successfully lobby for the school with state government. After becoming involved with the Republican Party, Goodwin was appointed to the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He was fired in 1992 but was immediately hired to serve as chief operating officer of Points of Light, a non-profit foundation started by President George H.W. Bush.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Goodwin, Section A2004_148_001_005, TRT: 0:20:14 ?

Robert Goodwin was hired as chief operating officer of the Points of Light Foundation in 1992. The foundation was started by George H.W. Bush in 1990 to promote volunteerism, and the first board of directors was comprised of important businesspeople and civic leaders such as Roberto Goizueta, Johnnetta B. Cole, Ray Chambers and Maggie Kuhn. The foundation has partnered with an array of well-known non-profits and offers trainings and consultations for volunteer organizations. Over the years, Goodwin saw a shift in common perceptions of volunteering as a kind and voluntary act to one regarded as necessary. Goodwin also found that African Americans volunteered more than commonly assumed when unofficial acts of volunteering or ones labeled with other terms were counted. Goodwin describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He also reflects upon his life and how he would like to be remembered.