

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Percy Bates

Overview of the Collection

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Bates, Percy |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Percy Bates, |
| Dates: | January 19, 2005 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2005 |
| Physical Description: | 6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:39:07). |
| Abstract: | Education professor Percy Bates (1932 -) served as assistant division director of curriculum, teaching and psychological studies and as director of programs for educational opportunity at the University of Michigan's School of Education. Bates was also a member of the Board in Control of Intercollegiate Athletics at the University of Michigan, and has served in the United States Department of Education. Bates was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 19, 2005, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2005_020 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educational psychologist Percy Bates was born July 8, 1932 in Pensacola, Florida. Raised by his mother, Gladys Travis Bates, he attended Spencer Bibbs Elementary School and Booker T. Washington High School. After moving to Detroit, Bates ran track and played football at Hamtramack High School, and he graduated from there in 1950. Entering the United States Army in 1952, Bates served at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, where he sang with fellow soldier and pianist Earl Grant. After earning his B.S. degree in biology from Central Michigan University in 1958, Bates received his M.A. in vocational rehabilitation in 1961 from Wayne State University and his Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Michigan in 1968.

In 1968, during a strike of black students demanding black faculty at the University of Michigan, Bates was promoted to assistant professor of education. At the University of Michigan's School of Education, Bates served as assistant division director of curriculum, teaching and psychological studies and as director of programs for educational opportunity. He later became deputy assistant secretary of special education in the United States Department of Education.

Bates is a member of the Board in Control of Intercollegiate Athletics at the University of Michigan. He is also very active in University of Michigan's Student Athlete Advisory Committee. A founding board member and former chairman of the Higher Education Commission of the National Alliance of Black School Educators, Bates has received numerous awards. Bates lives in Ann Arbor with his wife Cheryl.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Percy Bates was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 19, 2005, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Education professor Percy Bates (1932 -) served as assistant division director of curriculum, teaching and psychological studies and as director of programs for educational opportunity at the University of Michigan's School of Education. Bates was also a member of the Board in Control of Intercollegiate Athletics at the University of Michigan, and has served in the United States Department of Education.

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:

Bates, Percy

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Bates, Percy--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Education Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Percy Bates, January 19, 2005. 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 Percy Bates, Section A2005_020_001_001, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Percy Bates was born on July 8, 1932 in Pensacola, Florida. His mother, Gladys Travis Bates, was born around 1911 in Pensacola. Her family likely came from Troy, Alabama. She graduated from Booker T. Washington High School, the first in her family to complete secondary education. She was a domestic worker and had three children. His father, Percy Bates, Jr., was born in 1913 in Pensacola. He did not graduate from high school and worked general labor jobs. Although Bates' parents divorced when he was five, his mother made sure that he maintained a relationship with his father. Bates' step-grandfather engraved headstones for a living. Bates enjoyed spending time at his paternal

grandmother's house visiting his cousins. He was a good student and frequently competed with a young female classmate in spelling bees at Spencer Bibbs Elementary School. As a child, Bates crabbed and fished in the Gulf of Mexico, but he did not enjoy it very much. At one point in his youth, he saw a rare snowfall in Pensacola.

Video Oral History Interview with Percy Bates, Section A2005_020_001_002, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Percy Bates attended Spencer Bibbs Elementary School, a large all-black school that was an important part of his community in Pensacola, Florida. Bates found elementary school easy and was a responsible and well-behaved child; his mother often trusted him with paying bills. As a child, Bates attended Sunday school with his family, but church was a social rather than religious experience and not an integral part of his childhood. He attended Booker T. Washington High School through eighth grade. Due to his mother's fear that he would end up in trouble in Florida, he moved to Hamtramck, Michigan near Detroit with family friends to be a babysitter for their children. He felt more like an employee with the family, but he was driven to remain and take advantages of opportunities offered up North. Bates attended Copernicus Junior High School for one year then moved to Hamtramck High School. He struggled in these schools, which he found much less supportive, and aimed for just getting by rather than excelling.

Video Oral History Interview with Percy Bates, Section A2005_020_001_003, TRT: 0:30:22 ?

Percy Bates attended Hamtramck High School in Hamtramck, Michigan. He sang, played football and ran track there. His favorite subject was English, which he passed after being motivated by a challenging teacher. Bates decided to attend Central Michigan College in Mount Pleasant but deferred enrollment when drafted into the U.S. Army. He was stationed at Fort Bliss near El Paso, Texas from 1952 to 1954. In El Paso, Bates sang with musician Earl Grant and was almost tempted to give up college for a singing career. At Central Michigan, Bates joined a study group of fellow psychology majors who pushed each other to excel academically. His mother provided financial support when he struggled to cover tuition, and Bernard N. Meltzer mentored and influenced Bates and other African American students. After graduating from Central Michigan in 1958, Bates entered Wayne State University in Detroit and earned a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation before pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Video Oral History Interview with Percy Bates, Section A2005_020_001_004, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Percy Bates completed his Ph.D. in educational psychology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He wrote his dissertation on student motivation, using his research findings about internal and external motivation. As a graduate student, Bates advised undergraduates and worked with students in the Black Action Movement. He completed his degree in 1968. Although the university normally did not hire internally, they thought he would be well-suited to join the faculty. Bates was promoted to assistant professor of education during the time when University of Michigan president Robben Wright Fleming negotiated with student protesters who were shutting down the campus. He later became program head, then assistant dean. He took a leave of absence to serve as deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Office of Education under President Jimmy Carter. Since then, he has continued teaching at the University of Michigan and serving as its faculty representative to the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Video Oral History Interview with Percy Bates, Section A2005_020_001_005, TRT: 0:28:44 ?

Percy Bates admired the negotiations that occurred between the Black Action Movement and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor during the late 1960s.

Both the administration and the student protesters made a concerted effort to keep negotiations peaceful and productive, which kept the university from experiencing the riots that occurred on other campuses. From 1979 to 1980, Bates worked as deputy assistant secretary of special education in the U.S. Office of Education in Washington, D.C. In the 1980s, Bates began serving as faculty representative to the National Collegiate Athletic Association and Big Ten Conference for the University of Michigan. Bates talks about the pressures student athletes face, both financially and academically. He also describes his concerns for the African American community, explaining why he disagrees with Bill Cosby, and the impact of the Gratz v. Bollinger, 2003 U.S. Supreme Court case on affirmative action. He reflects upon his life and legacy, and talks about his family.

Video Oral History Interview with Percy Bates, Section A2005_020_001_006, TRT: 0:12:21 ?

Percy Bates describes how he wants to be remembered, which is as someone who was always willing to help others. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.