

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Kirk Anthony Sykes

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Sykes, Kirk A., 1958-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Kirk Anthony Sykes,
Dates:	March 24, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:57:02).
Abstract:	Real estate developer Kirk Anthony Sykes (1958 -) was the lead partner in the development and operation of the first African American-built hotel in Boston, Massachusetts, a 175-room, ten-story Hampton Inn & Suites. Sykes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 24, 2005, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_078
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Real estate developer Kirk A. Sykes was the lead partner in the development and operation of the first African American-built hotel in Boston, Massachusetts. The 175-room, ten-story Hampton Inn & Suites, one of a small number of minority-owned hotels which operate under a major franchise name, sits on the edge of Roxbury, a predominantly black neighborhood. Throughout his career, Sykes has used his unique blend of talents to help improve urban communities.

Born in Queens, New York in 1958 and raised in Providence, Rhode Island, Sykes graduated from the Moses Brown School, a private Quaker secondary institution. He then studied architecture at Cornell University, graduating with a B.A. degree. He would later attend both the MIT Center for Real Estate Development Executive Program and the Owner and Presidents Management Executive Program at Harvard University Business School.

Sykes first gained notoriety with Winthrop Estates, a townhouse complex he developed for the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston. Held up as an example of forward-looking urban development, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative was featured on a PBS documentary. Since then, Sykes has worked on a number of important development projects in the Boston area, including the redevelopment of the Boston Specialty Rehabilitation Hospital site and the Southwest Corridor retail project. In 2004, Sykes served as architect for the Democratic National Convention in Boston, converting the sports and concert-focused Fleet Center into an appropriate venue for the event.

Sykes is president of the New Boston Urban Strategy America Fund, a group which invests projects aimed at improving urban communities.

He and his wife Karen (née James) have two children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Kirk Anthony Sykes was conducted by Robert Hayden on March 24, 2005, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Real estate developer Kirk Anthony Sykes (1958 -) was the lead partner in the development and operation of the first African American-built hotel in Boston, Massachusetts, a 175-room, ten-story Hampton Inn & Suites.

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:

Sykes, Kirk A., 1958-

Hayden, Robert (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Sykes, Kirk A., 1958---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Real Estate Developer

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 Kirk Anthony Sykes, March 24, 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 Kirk Anthony Sykes, Section A2005_078_001_001, TRT: 0:28:59 ?

Kirk Anthony Sykes was born on April 29, 1958 in Queens, New York. His mother, Barbara Sykes, was born in 1931 in Jamaica, New York to Ida Swann and J. Ballard Swann. Her mother was a podiatrist and her father was a welder and entrepreneur. Barbara Swann attended Long Island University in New York City. Sykes' father, Lawrence Sykes, was born in 1931 in Decatur, Alabama to Frank Jehoy “Doc” Sykes. Doc Sykes was born to Solomon Sykes and Ada Garth Sykes. Solomon Sykes was a coal miner and mortician in Decatur,

Alabama. Doc Sykes attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and Howard University School of Dentistry in Washington, D.C. and worked as a Pullman porter, Negro League baseball player, and dentist. He also drove the getaway car to help the Scottsboro Boys escape lynching in Alabama. Lawrence Sykes was an art and photography professor. Sykes lived in Queens, New York; Baltimore, Maryland; and Valley Stream, New York before his family moved to Rhode Island during his first-grade year.

Video Oral History Interview with Kirk Anthony Sykes, Section A2005_078_001_002, TRT: 0:29:24 ?

Kirk Anthony Sykes moved to Providence, Rhode Island when he was in first grade where he attended Summit Avenue School, Henry Barnard Laboratory School, and Moses Brown School. At Moses Brown, he was one of two black students, and he became active in sports including skiing, lacrosse, and soccer. In high school, Sykes worked at Ronnie's Rascal House and Rix drugstore in Providence, Rhode Island. In 1974, his parents traveled to the University of Science and Technology in Accra, Ghana, and Sykes spent the year studying at the Leysin American School in Leysin, Switzerland and competing in freestyle skiing competitions. Sykes graduated from Moses Brown in 1976 and moved to Jackson, New Hampshire to teach skiing. Later in 1976, Sykes enrolled at Cornell University School of Architecture, where he received his B.Arch. Degree in 1980. In 1981, Sykes joined the design firm of Stull and Lee Associates, Inc. in Boston, Massachusetts, co-owned by HistoryMaker Donald Stull. He also became active in the Boston NAACP.

Video Oral History Interview with Kirk Anthony Sykes, Section A2005_078_001_003, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Kirk Anthony Sykes worked with the design firm of Stull and Lee Associates, Inc. in Boston, Massachusetts until 1986, on the Southwest Corridor Orange Line project and Roxbury Community College. At night, Sykes worked on renovations of brownstones in the South End neighborhood. He helped found the Robert Taylor Society of Black Architects in Boston and attended the MIT Center for Real Estate program for minority developers. With his Primary Group, Sykes helped design the Central Artery Project in Boston. In 1996, he officially launched Primary Corporation with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) and the building of Winthrop Estates. In 1997, Sykes enrolled in the Owner/President Management program at Harvard Business School and graduated in 1999. Sykes describes his work with the New Boston Fund and the planning, development, financing, and success of the Crosstown Center in Boston, Massachusetts.

Video Oral History Interview with Kirk Anthony Sykes, Section A2005_078_001_004, TRT: 0:28:59 ?

Kirk Anthony Sykes became President of the New Boston Urban Strategy America Fund, which finances projects in African American communities in Massachusetts, Maryland, and Connecticut, including the renovation of Boston State Hospital in Mattapan, Massachusetts and the Crosstown Project. Sykes talks about some of the other projects he is working on in Boston, Massachusetts, including the South Bay Harbor Trail and the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. Sykes reflects upon his influences, including HistoryMaker Vernon Jordan, as well as on his life and career choices. Sykes ends the interview by reflecting on his legacy, his hopes and concerns for the African American community, how he would like to be remembered, his message for today's youth, and his recent skiing trips. He also narrates his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Kirk Anthony Sykes, Section

A2005_078_Sykes_Kirk_06_MED_002, TRT: