

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reuben A. Munday

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Munday, Reuben A., 1947-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reuben A. Munday,
Dates:	April 5, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:54:20).
Abstract:	Real estate lawyer and commercial lawyer Reuben A. Munday (1947 -) and his firm represented various municipal corporations in the development of major projects in the city of Detroit, including the Trolley Plaza Apartments; Trappers Alley; the Robert L. Millender Center; the Madison Center Court House; the Cobo Hall Expansion Project; the Chrysler Jefferson Avenue Assembly Plant; and the Chrysler Mack Avenue Engine Plant. Munday was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 5, 2005, in Detroit, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_096
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Attorney Reuben Alexander Munday was born on March 2, 1947, in East Orange, New Jersey. Attending Logan Nursery School and Chambliss Children's House, Munday graduated from Wyoming Seminary School, a boarding school in Kingston, Pennsylvania. Earning his B.A. in English in 1971, Munday worked for Cornell University's Office of Public Information from 1972 to 1974; he received his M.P.S. degree in African American Studies in 1974, and enrolled in the University of Michigan Law School, graduating in 1976.

In 1977, Munday became an associate with the Detroit firm of Lewis, White, Clay and Graves (now Lewis and Munday). President of the firm from 1994 to 2003, Munday's primary areas of practice included real estate acquisition and sale, commercial leases, mortgage financing, commercial and industrial real estate development, and problem real estate loan work outs. Munday's firm represented various municipal corporations in the development of major projects in the city of Detroit, including the Trolley Plaza Apartments; Trappers Alley; the Robert L. Millender Center; the Madison Center Court House; the Cobo Hall Expansion Project; the Chrysler Jefferson Avenue Assembly Plant; and the Chrysler Mack Avenue Engine Plant. Munday served as the first African American general counsel to downtown Detroit development during Mayor Coleman Young's administration.

A sought after teacher and speaker on continuing legal education, Munday was also a member of many legal associations, including the American Bar Association; Detroit Bar Association; the Wolverine Bar Association; and the National Bar Association. A board member of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, St. John Health System Finance Committee, Fund for Detroit's Future, City of Detroit Board of Ethics, National Conference for Community and Justice, City Year Detroit, and St. John Riverview Hospital, Munday married Dr. Cheryl Munday, with whom he had a son.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reuben A. Munday was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 5, 2005, in Detroit, Michigan, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Real estate lawyer and commercial lawyer Reuben A. Munday (1947 -) and his firm represented various municipal corporations in the development of major projects in the city of Detroit, including the Trolley Plaza Apartments; Trappers Alley; the Robert L. Millender Center; the Madison Center Court House; the Cobo Hall Expansion Project; the Chrysler Jefferson Avenue Assembly Plant; and the Chrysler Mack Avenue Engine Plant.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

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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:

Munday, Reuben A., 1947-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Munday, Reuben A., 1947---Interviews

African American lawyers--Interviews

Real estate lawyers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Real Estate Lawyer

Commercial Lawyer

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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 Reuben A. Munday, April 5, 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 Reuben A. Munday, Section A2005_096_001_001, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Reuben A. Munday talks about his parents' backgrounds. His mother, Gustine Elizabeth Alexander Munday, was born July 11, 1906 in Henderson, Kentucky. An educated woman, she received her B.A. degree in journalism from Ohio State University in Columbus and her M.A. degree at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. In Tuskegee, she met Munday's father, Reuben Abraham Munday, who was born February 10, 1900 in Berea, Kentucky to a family of farmers. Munday's father received his bachelor's degree from Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia and a master's degree at Iowa State University in Ames. In 1938, Munday's father taught and coached football at Tennessee State University in Nashville, before receiving his Ph.D. in 1947 from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, where Munday's older sister was born. Munday was born March 2, 1947 in Orange, New Jersey, but grew up on Tuskegee's campus, where his father was a professor and his mother worked in public relations at The Oaks, Booker T. Washington's house.

African American lawyers--Interviews.

Real estate lawyers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Reuben A. Munday, Section A2005_096_001_002, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Reuben A. Munday recalls his earliest memories and the sights, sounds, and smells of his childhood in and around the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama where his parents were faculty members. There, he attended elementary and middle school from 1953 to 1961 at the Chambliss Children's House. As a young boy, Munday was outgoing and enjoyed sports. Until the seventh grade, he only had African American teachers, and he was surrounded by the legacies of African American leaders like Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, and Monroe Work. He describes the campus community at Tuskegee as largely self-sufficient and self-contained, both disciplined and compassionate, and full of music and dance. Spiritual music was important in the community, and the blues were also popular. Munday compares the Institute's role in his nuclear family to that of the church in his extended family. Munday's devout grandmother, with whom he was close, came to live with his family in Tuskegee toward the end of her life.

Video Oral History Interview with Reuben A. Munday, Section A2005_096_001_003, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Reuben A. Munday describes his high school years. Like many other educated African Americans, his parents, who were faculty members at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, sent Munday and his siblings to northern private schools because of the condition of segregated schools in Alabama. In 1961, Munday decided to attend the Wyoming Seminary School in Kingston, Pennsylvania, where he experienced stark differences between his own culture and that of wealthy northern whites. In high school, he was active in baseball, glee club, and the civil court, but aspired to become a doctor. Returning to Tuskegee for summer education programs in 1964 and 1965, Munday became involved in the Civil Rights Movement, working with SNCC to register African American voters. He talks about *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* (1960), a gerrymandering case in Tuskegee, and hearing Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown speak. After graduating high school in 1965, Munday enrolled in Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Reuben A. Munday, Section A2005_096_001_004, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Reuben A. Munday describes his years at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York from 1965 to 1974. During his freshman year in 1966, his acquaintance Sammy Younge, Jr., was murdered in Tuskegee, Alabama for using a whites-only restroom. The murder led Munday to reexamine his views on race. He describes tensions between students and faculty on the campus of Tuskegee Institute, where his parents taught, as the younger generation became more politically active. At Cornell, Munday joined the African American Society, later the Black Liberation Front, and when African American students occupied Willard Straight Hall on campus in 1969, he wrote an article in their defense. That year, Munday dropped out of school and moved to Charleston, South Carolina. He returned in 1970, receiving his B.A. degree in English in 1971 and his M.P.S. degree in African American studies in 1974. He talks about Johnny Ford, who became Tuskegee's first black mayor in 1972.

Video Oral History Interview with Reuben A. Munday, Section A2005_096_001_005, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Reuben A. Munday talks about his legal career. He received his B.A. degree in English at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York in 1970, and his M.P.S. degree in African American Studies in 1974. His professors at Cornell included John Henrik Clarke, HistoryMaker Yosef Ben-Jochannan, and Ahmed Mohiddin. Munday wrote news for Cornell's Office of Public Information from 1972 to 1974, before deciding to pursue a legal career. When his wife Cheryl, whom he married in 1971, got a job at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, he applied to the University's law school, enrolling in 1974 and receiving his J.D. degree in 1976. He then joined the law firm of Lewis, White, Clay and Graves in Detroit, Michigan, now Lewis and Munday, becoming a partner in 1977. Despite challenges with retaining employees and expanding the business, he is proud of the firm's contributions to the community. Munday also talks about Detroit mayor Coleman Young and the importance of developing Detroit's African American professional class.

Video Oral History Interview with Reuben A. Munday, Section A2005_096_001_006, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

Reuben A. Munday reflects upon his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and on his personal legacy. He describes Detroit, Michigan's failed attempt to build Africa Town, a black business district. He also shares his observations on economic practices in the African American community and within immigrant groups. Munday talks about his service in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentorship program, his family, and what he would do differently. He also considers the importance of preserving history and how he would like to be remembered. Munday concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Reuben A. Munday, Section A2005_096_Munday_Reuben_06_MED_001, TRT: