

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Melvin Hart

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hart, Melvin, 1952-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Melvin Hart,
Dates:	July 14, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:24:50).
Abstract:	Marketing executive and newspaper publishing executive Melvin Hart (1952 - 2022) was the manager and director of marketing for the Black Media Group as well as publisher of South Carolina's weekly African American newspaper, Black News. Hart was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 14, 2005, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_164
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Marketing executive and newspaper publishing executive Melvin Hart was born on January 7, 1952 to Cleola Kimpson Hart, a homemaker, and Furman “Toot” Hart. Furman was a World War II veteran, former member of the Civilian Conservation Corps and one of the founders of the local branch of the NAACP in St. Matthews, South Carolina. Hart attended Guinyard, a segregated African American elementary school. When he reached the eighth grade, Hart became one of a small group of African American students to integrate Saint Matthews High School. In 1970, Hart was one of five African Americans, out of a class of approximately seventy-five students, to graduate from St. Matthews.

Hart was the Senior Vice President of Marketing and Advertising for South Carolina Black Media Group, publisher of Columbia, South Carolina's African American newspaper, "Black News." As manager and director of marketing at the organization, Hart worked to ensure that the information needs of the African American population in South Carolina were met. *Black News*, a weekly publication, serves South Carolina's forty-six counties, including rural, suburban and metropolitan areas.

Active in his church and community, Hart was re-appointed to the Historic Columbia Foundation Board of Trustees for 2005 and 2006, his second term.

Melvin Hart was interviewed by *the HistoryMakers* on July 14, 2005.

Hart passed away on October 30, 2021, at the age of 69.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Melvin Hart was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 14, 2005, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Marketing executive and newspaper publishing executive Melvin Hart (1952 - 2022) was the manager and director of marketing for the Black Media Group as well as publisher of South Carolina's weekly African American newspaper, Black News.

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:

Hart, Melvin, 1952-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hart, Melvin, 1952---Interviews

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

African Americans in the newspaper industry--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Marketing Executive

Newspaper Publishing Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Melvin Hart, July 14, 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 Melvin Hart, Section A2005_164_001_001, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Melvin Hart was born on January 7, 1952 in St. Matthews, South Carolina to

Cleola Kimpson Hart and Furman Hart, Sr. Hart's maternal grandparents were active at Second Mount Beulah Baptist Church while his father's family attended Emancipation Baptist Church in St. Matthews. Hart's mother was born on February 28, 1923 and she grew up on a farm in St. Matthews with two brothers and seven sisters who were known for their cooking. She completed high school. Hart's father was born on December 24, 1921, also in St. Matthews, and was raised by his father, Ben Hart, a sharecropper, after his mother, Ollie Guinyard Hart, died. Hart's father dropped out of the fourth grade to help on the farm. After returning home from serving in World War II, Hart's father worked with the Civilian Conservation Corps and helped build the Savannah River Site in Aiken, South Carolina, where he worked for almost forty years. Hart describes his parents' personalities and whom he takes after.

African American families--South Carolina--Saint Matthews.

Savannah River Site (S.C.).

Civilian Conservation Corps (U.S.).

Savannah River Plant (E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company).

Aiken (S.C.).

Video Oral History Interview with Melvin Hart, Section A2005_164_001_002, TRT: 0:28:10 ?

Melvin Hart grew up in a middle to upper-middle class neighborhood near downtown St. Matthews, South Carolina. He started kindergarten early so he could accompany his older friend who had started school before him. Hart's mother was a housewife, so to supplement his father's income, Hart and his siblings cut firewood and sold it. As a child, Hart enjoyed playing football, baseball, and basketball with his friends in the vacant lot next to his house. For fun, Hart also made a game out of rolling old tires and car oil cans down the street. Hart remembers lightening bugs, the smell of summer rain, and the sounds of cars. Hart was a smart and competitive student at Guinyard Elementary School, which was named after a distant relative of his paternal grandmother, Ollie Guinyard Hart. Many of his teachers were close to his family, having taught his older siblings and parents. When Hart was in eighth grade, he transferred to the integrated Saint Matthews High School.

African American families--South Carolina--Saint Matthews.

African Americans--South Carolina--Saint Matthews--Social life and customs.

African Americans--Education (Elementary).

African Americans--Education (Secondary).

School Integration--South Carolina--Saint Matthews.

African American children--South Carolina--Saint Matthews.

African American children--South Carolina--Saint Matthews--Social life and customs.

Fuelwood cutting.

Child labor.

Video Oral History Interview with Melvin Hart, Section A2005_164_001_003, TRT: 0:27:30 ?

Melvin Hart's father, Furman Hart, Sr., was one of the founding members of St. Matthew's NAACP chapter and was active in the Voter Education Project in the 1960s. Hart's father often met with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Penn Center in St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Although Hart was too young to join SNCC, he accompanied his father to civil rights meetings. At home, Hart read newspapers like the Philadelphia Tribune, the Afro-American Newspaper, and Grit. At Guinyard Elementary School, Hart was taught by the daughter of educator John Ford, the namesake for the African American high school in St.

Matthews, South Carolina. Hart's father insisted that Hart be allowed to integrate Saint Matthew High School, despite the objections of the school superintendent and Senator L. Marion Gressette. At Saint Matthews, Hart played baseball, football, and basketball and stood up against racist bullies. Hart remembers the racial tension after the murder of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

African Americans--Education (Elementary).

African Americans--Education (Secondary).

School Integration--South Carolina--Saint Matthews.

African Americans--Race relations.

Civil rights movements--South Carolina--Saint Matthews.

African American teachers.