

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Albert Dotson, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dotson, Albert, 1960-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Albert Dotson, Jr.,
Dates:	February 16, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:11:12).
Abstract:	Lawyer Albert Dotson, Jr. (1960 -) is an equity partner at the Miami law firm of Bilzin, Sumberg, Baena, Price & Axelrod, LLP. Dotson is Chairman of 100 Black Men of America, and was president of the Orange Bowl Committee for the 2006-2007 season. Dotson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 16, 2006, in Miami, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_020
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lawyer Albert E. Dotson, Jr. was born on June 9, 1960 in Detroit, Michigan. Dotson is the oldest of four siblings. Values of self pride and community development were instilled in Dotson and his siblings at very early ages. Dotson's father, Albert E. Dotson, Sr., became the first African American store manager for Sears Roebuck & Company. His position required relocation to several Sears' stores across the country. Thus, the Dotson family lived in Detroit, Chicago, and Atlanta. The family settled in Miami, Florida where Dotson, Sr. and his family formed personal relationships with various African American community leaders. In 1978, Dotson, Jr. became the first family member to attend a four-year university. He enrolled in Dartmouth University majoring in economics and history. After his third quarter, Dotson took advantage of the foreign exchange programs at Dartmouth traveling to Morocco and Spain. Dotson graduated from Dartmouth in 1984. He then received a full scholarship to attend Vanderbilt University's Law School in Nashville, Tennessee. During his academic tenure, Dotson was awarded the Bennett Douglas Bell Memorial Prize for academic achievement and high ethical standards. In 1987, Dotson completed his J.D. degree. He works in private practice as an equity partner with the Miami law firm of Bilzin, Sumberg, Baena, Price & Axelrod, LLP specializing in land use and zoning, and federal and local government procurement contracts and compliance.

In 1993, Dotson was the second African American to be voted on the Orange Bowl. Dotson's father was the first African American to serve in this capacity. Dotson served as Vice President of 100 Black Men of America in 1996, later becoming Chairman in 2004. In March 2006, Dotson was sworn in to serve as President of The Orange Bowl Committee for the 2006-2007 Orange Bowl Festival and FedEx Orange Bowl Game.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Albert Dotson, Jr. was conducted by Tracey Lewis on February 16, 2006, in

Miami, Florida, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Lawyer Albert Dotson, Jr. (1960 -) is an equity partner at the Miami law firm of Bilzin, Sumberg, Baena, Price & Axelrod, LLP. Dotson is Chairman of 100 Black Men of America, and was president of the Orange Bowl Committee for the 2006-2007 season.

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:

Dotson, Albert, 1960-

Lewis, Tracey (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dotson, Albert, 1960- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

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 Albert Dotson, Jr., February 16, 2006. 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 Albert Dotson, Jr., Section A2006_020_001_001, TRT: 0:29:38
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Albert Dotson, Jr. was born on June 9, 1960 in Detroit, Michigan to Earlene Puryear Dotson and Albert Dotson, Sr. Dotson's maternal grandfather, Earl Puryear, was the first African American to be a licensed private patrolman in Michigan, where his clients included Motown Records. His paternal grandfather, Fred Rowland, was a lifelong employee of Chrysler Corporation. His father joined Sears, Roebuck and Co. as a stock boy at the age of nineteen, and worked up to roles in management. Dotson's parents met at Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church in Hamtramck, Michigan, married, and had five children, of whom he was the oldest. He recalls fishing in the Detroit River, once hosting James Brown at his family's home, and seeing Reverend Jesse L. Jackson at

Operation PUSH events. Dotson's father was promoted to store manager first in Chicago, Illinois and then Atlanta, Georgia during Dotson's teenage years. After first attending several public schools, he graduated from Woodward Academy in College Park, Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Albert Dotson, Jr., Section A2006_020_001_002, TRT: 0:30:03
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Albert Dotson, Jr. lived in Atlanta, Georgia from 1973 to 1976, where he attended Mount Moriah Baptist Church under pastor Howard W. Creecy, Sr., and befriended the families of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy. He played basketball for Woodward Academy in College Park, Georgia, and was selected as the ball boy for the Atlanta Hawks due to a family connection to Walt Bellamy. Dotson began collecting NBA stars' sneakers while on the job. Dotson recalls the excitement of Maynard Jackson's election as mayor of Atlanta and his experiences at Woodward, where he experienced discriminatory comments from a teacher. In 1976, Dotson moved to Miami, Florida after his father, Albert Dotson, Sr., was transferred to a Sears, Roebuck and Co. store in Hialeah, Florida. Dotson continued to play basketball at Miami Palmetto Senior High School. A classmate's father and local lawyer, Robert C. Josefsberg, attended a game and as a result recommended Dotson for admission to Dartmouth College.

Video Oral History Interview with Albert Dotson, Jr., Section A2006_020_001_003, TRT: 0:29:30
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Albert Dotson, Jr. graduated from Miami Palmetto Senior High School in 1978, and on the guidance of a local lawyer, Robert C. Josefsberg, enrolled at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. His father, Albert Dotson, Sr., escorted Dotson to Dartmouth to begin his first year. He played varsity basketball, pledged Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, majored in history and economics, and befriended mentors Jerry Nunnally and Jennifer Joseph. He joined the Afro-American Society, which led protests in 1979 to urge the college to divest from companies who supported the South African apartheid regime. These protests resulted in classes' cancellation. Due to the Dartmouth Plan, Dotson was not required to be on campus after his first year, and he studied abroad at the University of Granada in Spain; he lived with a Spanish-speaking family and often visited Morocco. He served as an intern for Janet Reno, then the state attorney of Miami-Dade County, Florida. From graduation to 1984, he worked for Xerox Corporation.

Video Oral History Interview with Albert Dotson, Jr., Section A2006_020_001_004, TRT: 0:29:46
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Albert Dotson, Jr. entered law school at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1984, where he was one of few African American students. He became president of the school chapter of the National Black Law Students Association in his second year. There, Dotson partnered with the Women Law Students' Association to bring influential speakers to campus. After his first year, he clerked over the summer for the firm of his mentor Robert C. Josefsberg in Miami, Florida. Josefsberg's recommendation helped secure him a job in real estate law at Fine Jacobson Schwartz Nash Block and England after he graduated with his J.D. degree in 1987. Returning to Miami, Dotson was the founding president of 100 Black Men of South Florida. It later merged with 100 Black Men of America, Inc., of which Dotson was elected secretary in 1994, vice president in 1996, and president in 2004. He became a partner at Bilzin, Sumberg, Baena, Price and Axelrod LLP in 1998, where he specialized in land use and zoning law.

Video Oral History Interview with Albert Dotson, Jr., Section A2006_020_001_005, TRT: 0:12:15
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Albert Dotson, Jr. was voted to serve as a member of the Orange Bowl Committee in 1993. He was the second African American to serve on the committee after his father, Albert Dotson, Sr. While on the committee, he assisted in the Orange Bowl's transition to membership in the Bowl Championship Series postseason event, and also broadened the committee's activities beyond football, including youth sports leagues, a sailing regatta, and scholarship banquets and events. As president of the committee in 2006 and 2007, Dotson faced the challenges of maintaining its multimillion dollar budget and transitioning to FOX, the bowl's new television network. He served as a partner at Bilzin, Sumberg, Baena, Price and Axelrod LLP in Miami, Florida, where he specialized in land use and government procurement. He describes the firm's support for his non-profit endeavors. Dotson also reflects upon the importance of traveling with his family, and shares advice for his son, Albert Dotson, III.