

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Walter I. Delph

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Delph, Walter I., 1944-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 27, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:05:02).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Urologist Dr. Walter I. Delph (1944 - ) was the director of urology at North General Hospital in New York City. Delph was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 27, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_170
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Urologist Dr. Walter Ivey Delph, Jr. was born on March 25, 1944 in Harlem, New York to Dr. Walter Ivey Delph, Sr., a real estate entrepreneur and family doctor, and Minnette Tillman Delph. Delph's father was financier and builder of the Ivey Delph Apartments at 19 Hamilton Terrace in Harlem, New York, the first Black apartment project to be backed by a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage. Designed by Vertner Tandy, the first licensed African American architect in New York, Ivey Delph tenants included Marilyn Keets, Buck Clayton and Ted Sturgis.

Raised on Harlem's Sugar Hill in the 1950s, Delph got his first haircut from Dr. Robert Craft, surrounded by members of the "Black Royalty" who frequented his home. Visitors included Duke Ellington, a young Thurgood Marshall and Jackie Robinson. As a teen, Delph worked at a dry cleaner, at the Ivey Delph in the summer time, and accompanied his father on house calls. Delph's father's patients included Ralph Bunche and Delph's godfather, Adam Clayton Powell. Adam Wells mentored Delph after he lost his father at age sixteen.

After a lackluster academic start, Delph found his passion in high school science. Accepted at Adelphi University, Delph earned his B.A. degree and advanced to a memorable career at Howard Medical School where he was trained and mentored by colleagues of his father. During high school, Delph trained in surgery at Montefiore Hospital. Delph returned to Montefiore Hospital after medical school for a residency in general surgery, but soon switched to a relatively nascent field, urology. Delph's career has spanned vast improvements in urological treatment and endured major shifts in medicine, including the advent of the HMO.

Delph, the former Director of Urology at North General Hospital, the American Cancer Society since 1982 and served as the president of the Students American Medical Association (SAMA) when he was at Howard University and supports the Schomburg Center for Black Research. Delph served on the board of the YMCA from 1978 to 1982 and the New York Urban League from 1982 to 1987.

Delph is currently married to Aminta Griffith. He has three children: Andrea, Walter, III and Channing Delph.

Delph was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 27, 2007.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph was conducted by Adrienne Jones on April 27, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Urologist Dr. Walter I. Delph (1944 - ) was the director of urology at North General Hospital in New York City.

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## 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®.

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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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Delph, Walter I., 1944-

Jones, Adrienne (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Delph, Walter I., 1944- --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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North General Hospital (New York, N.Y.)

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### Occupations:

Urologist

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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## 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 Dr. Walter I. Delph, April 27, 2007. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph, Section A2007\_170\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:42 ?

Dr. Walter I. Delph was born on March 25, 1944 in New York City to Minnette

Tillman Delph and Dr. Walter Delph, Sr. His mother was born in Concord, North Carolina; and, after moving to New York City, attended Hunter College, and worked for Chase National Bank. Delph's father was born in 1895 in Augusta, Georgia, where he studied at Lucy Craft Laney High School. He went on to attend Lincoln University in Lincoln, Pennsylvania, and then the Howard University School of Medicine in Washington, D.C. Delph's father became a general practice physician in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, where he befriended politician Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., diplomat Ralph Bunche and physician Robert J. Craft. Around 1945, Delph's father built the Ivey Delph Apartments on Hamilton Terrace in Harlem. He secured a mortgage from the Federal Housing Administration, and hired architect Vertner Woodson Tandy. Trumpeter Buck Clayton resided in the building, which Delph's father operated until his death.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph, Section A2007\_170\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:01 ?

Dr. Walter I. Delph's parents, Minnette Tillman Delph and physician Walter Delph, Sr., moved to New York City's Harlem neighborhood from the South, where his maternal grandmother, Dicie Ann Tillman, was his only living grandparent. In Harlem, his parents' annual Thanksgiving parties were attended by attorney Thurgood Marshall, bandleader Duke Ellington, writer Langston Hughes and politician Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Delph began his education at The Dalton School, where he and his neighbor, future author Samuel Ray Delany, Jr., received scholarships to attend. There, his peers were wealthy and mostly white. For high school, Delph attended the Riverdale Country School in the Bronx, where his football teammates included Calvin Hill, who became a professional player. In 1960, while Delph was still in high school, his father passed away. From that time, his father's friends and colleagues, including physician Aaron Wells and surgeon Harry M. Delany, helped Delph secure summer employment at the local hospitals.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph, Section A2007\_170\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:03 ?

Dr. Walter I. Delph attended Adelphi University in Garden City, New York, where he joined the electronics club and glee club, and was recruited to a campus fraternity by his friend, James Chestnut. He earned a degree in biology, and was accepted to the Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C., where his father was an alumnus. There, Delph met Edward James Collins, who became his lifelong friend, and studied under professors such as William Montague Cobb, R. Frank Jones, Moses Wharton Young and Dr. LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr. He also worked in a darkroom for pathologist R. Leonard Tillman, and joined the university's traveling gospel choir. Delph married during his second year of medical school, and had his first daughter, Andrea Delph. Delph divorced after moving to New York City for his internship at the Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, where he was supervised by surgeon Harry M. Delany. After completing his training, Delph was drafted into the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph, Section A2007\_170\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:09 ?

Dr. Walter I. Delph attended the Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C., where he worked as a surgical researcher for Dr. LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr. Delph completed his internship at the Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, New York, and then was drafted into the U.S. Air Force in 1970. He was stationed at Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, Japan. In 1973, Delph

returned to the Montefiore Medical Center as a urology resident under Selwyn Fried. During his residency, he conducted pediatric kidney transplants and kidney cancer surgeries, and also developed screenings and treatments for prostate cancer. He completed his residency in 1978, and turned down a position as the chief of urology at the Harlem Hospital Center. Instead, he founded a private urology practice in the Harlem community, and primarily treated patients on Medicare and Medicaid. Delph also joined the National Medical Association, where he was mentored by physicians John L.S. Holloman, Jr. and Dr. Muriel Petioni.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph, Section A2007\_170\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Dr. Walter I. Delph joined the Manhattan Central Medical Society, New York City's chapter of the National Medical Association, in 1978. He impressed its members, including Dr. Muriel Petioni and Aaron Wells, and was elected president in 1980. During his tenure, he instituted presidential term limits, and prioritized the mentorship of black medical students. Delph settled with his family in Scarsdale, New York, where his neighbors included black professionals like Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr., business executive Earl G. Graves, Sr. and dentist R. Chester Redhead. He continued to practice in New York City's Harlem community, and encountered financial difficulties due to changes in the insurance industry. Delph contracted cancer in his neck and then his kidney, and was treated at New York City's Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. After his diagnosis with kidney cancer, he joined the Baptist church, and was influenced by the writings of the theologian Howard Thurman.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph, Section A2007\_170\_001\_006, TRT: 0:27:52 ?

Dr. Walter I. Delph's religious faith was influenced by theologian Howard Thurman, who learned from Mahatma Gandhi, and taught civil rights leaders like Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. In the late 1970s, Delph joined the board of the Harlem YMCA, and led its committee on teenage pregnancy. He was active with the National Urban League, where he worked with attorney Charles J. Hamilton, Jr. Delph also belonged to Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity; the American Cancer Society, where he served under its president, Dr. Harold Freeman; and the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation, which was led by politician Charles B. Rangel. In 1981, Delph qualified as a police surgeon, and joined the New York City Police Department team led by Clarence G. Robinson. At the time of the interview, Delph continued to practice medicine in the Harlem community of New York City, and planned to retire to Panama with his wife, Aminta Griffith. He concludes this part of the interview by reflecting upon his legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Walter I. Delph, Section A2007\_170\_001\_007, TRT: 0:10:35 ?

Dr. Walter I. Delph narrates his photographs.