

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Marvin Perry

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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>	Perry, Marvin, 1944-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Marvin Perry,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 14, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:21:08).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Banker and nonprofit chief executive Marvin Perry (1944 - ) was the founder of the Black Board of Directors Project in Phoenix, Arizona, whose purpose was to promote minority executive leadership in corporate, nonprofit and policy making institutions. Perry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 14, 2007, in Phoenix, Arizona. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_209
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Founder of the Black Board of Directors Project, Marvin Early Perry, was born on November 10, 1944, in Elmore City, Oklahoma. Perry earned his B.A. and M.S. degrees in economics from the University of Central Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University respectively. Shortly thereafter, Perry graduated from the American Bankers Association Commercial Lending School, beginning his professional career in banking.

In response to the vastly underrepresented amount of minorities on corporate boards, Perry founded the Black Board of Directors Project in Phoenix, Arizona in 1984. The project's purpose is promoting the involvement of minorities in executive positions within corporate, nonprofit, and public policy making institutions at the state and national level. In the organization's history, which spans over two decades, the Black Board of Directors Project has placed over 1,800 blacks and other minorities on various boards and commissions. By facilitating seminars and conferences centered on corporate board education, Perry hopes to empower members of Arizona's black community by encouraging them to seek board membership on a corporate level. In doing so, local businesses and agencies will involve more minorities in their policy-making processes.

In 1995, Perry broadened his commitment to community service by becoming a founding board member on the Arizona State University College of Extended Education Dean's Council. Perry aided the College of Extended Education for years in its mission to broaden access to quality education to all learners in Maricopa County and beyond. His leadership helped the college reach out to Arizona's traditional and nontraditional learners through innovative locations, methods, curricula, schedules and technologies to meet their lifelong learning needs.

Perry was awarded for his dedicated service to higher education in 2002 when he was given a Distinguished Service Award from Arizona State University, and again in 2007 by receiving an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Advancing Technology. In 2008, Perry selected as the co-recipient of the Arizona State Bar of Arizona's Award of Appreciation.

Perry continues to expand his long history of civic involvement, including board service with the Arizona State Bar Association, the Hispanic Leadership Institute, the Arizona Civil Rights Advisory Board, the Valley of the Sun United Way, the Scottsdale Cultural Center, as well as a list of municipal and county committees and boards. Perry also serves as President of P.E. International, a Phoenix-based marketing and public relations firm.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Marvin Perry was conducted by Jacques Lesure on July 14, 2007, in Phoenix, Arizona, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Banker and nonprofit chief executive Marvin Perry (1944 - ) was the founder of the Black Board of Directors Project in Phoenix, Arizona, whose purpose was to promote minority executive leadership in corporate, nonprofit and policy making institutions.

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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:

Perry, Marvin, 1944-

Lesure, Jacques (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Perry, Marvin, 1944- --Interviews

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African American businesspeople--Interviews

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African American bankers--Interviews

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African American executives--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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Black Board of Directors Project

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## Occupations:

Civic Leader

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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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 Marvin Perry, July 14, 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.

## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Marvin Perry, Section A2007\_209\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Marvin Perry was born on November 10, 1944 in Elmore City, Oklahoma to Adeller Miles Perry and Raymond Perry, Sr. Both of his paternal great-grandfathers, Joe Perry and William Douglas, were born into slavery in Texas, as was Perry's grandfather, Tim Perry. After emancipation, he became a successful and well known entrepreneur in Garvin County, Oklahoma. Perry's maternal great-grandfather, Kingly Chapman, served in the Spanish American War, and worked as a land surveyor in Garvin County. Many years later, Perry's mother was born in Garvin County to Bernice Miles and Willie Miles. She had no formal education, and worked in domestic service. Perry's parents raised him and his seven siblings on a farm outside of Elmore City. The town barred African Americans from entering after dark, so Perry and his family often travelled to Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, which had a segregated black community. Perry attended the all-black Averitt View School, where he was a strong student and participated in the 4-H club.

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

African American bankers--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Marvin Perry, Section A2007\_209\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:26 ?

Marvin Perry attended the all-black Averitt View School in Elmore City, Oklahoma until 1957, when the public schools were integrated in the State of Oklahoma. At that time, Perry transferred to the Katie School in nearby Katie, Oklahoma. There, he and his peers were welcomed by Principal Roy Romine, who ensured they were able to participate equally in all school activities. Perry continued to excel academically, and went on to attend Elmore City High School, where his older siblings, Cleaven Perry and Nova Perry, were among the first integrated class. At Elmore City High School, Perry and the African American students were verbally and physically abused by their white classmates. On one occasion, Perry was hit in the head with a pipe, and sustained a severe concussion. In 1962, he graduated from high school and joined two of his brothers in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where he found work as a salesman.

Video Oral History Interview with Marvin Perry, Section A2007\_209\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Marvin Perry worked as a salesman in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. While there, he decided to enroll in night classes at Oklahoma City University. During his studies, Perry also worked at a recently integrated cafeteria. Perry left the university after one semester due to the death of his mother, Adeller Miles Perry. In 1965, he resumed his education at Central State College in Edmond, Oklahoma. While there, Perry joined the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. He obtained a bachelor's degree in economics in 1969, and interviewed for a fellowship with the Ford Foundation, where he met Professor Samuel Dubois Cook. Perry went on to earn a master's degree in economics from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. At this point in the interview, Perry remembers the assassinations of civil rights leaders Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He also recalls learning about the shooting of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy while listening to the radio in

Oklahoma City.

Video Oral History Interview with Marvin Perry, Section A2007\_209\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:27 ?

Marvin Perry earned a master's degree in economics from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. There, he studied manpower economics under Professor Richard Leftwich, who was a student of the noted economist Milton Friedman. Upon graduating in 1971, Perry moved to Boston, Massachusetts to work as a researcher at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. After three years, he decided to enter the commercial banking industry, and accepted a position as a credit manager in the leasing department of the Omaha National Bank in Omaha, Nebraska. While there, Perry founded the Midwest Executive Development Leadership Conference to support black leaders in Corporate America. He was also elected chairman and president of Omaha's Mid-City Business and Professional Association. In this role, Perry solicited financing from local business owners, and brought the organization out of debt. In 1976, Perry accepted a position at the Arizona Bank, and moved to Phoenix, Arizona.

Video Oral History Interview with Marvin Perry, Section A2007\_209\_001\_005, TRT: 0:12:45 ?

Marvin Perry accepted a position in the lending division of the Arizona Bank in Phoenix, Arizona. Upon arriving in Phoenix, Perry met with the city's minority organizations, including the Phoenix Urban League. Over time, Perry faced increasing hostility from his white colleagues at the bank. After several failed attempts to discuss the issue with his supervisors, Perry filed an official complaint against the Arizona Bank with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and eventually won the case. He also filed a shareholders resolution against the bank, called for divestment from South Africa and partnered with the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) to stage a demonstration march. In 1984, Perry founded the Black Board of Directors Project, which sought to recruit more minority leaders to corporate boards. Perry also served on the boards of the Phoenix Urban League, Valley of the Sun United Way and Scottsdale Cultural Council.

Video Oral History Interview with Marvin Perry, Section A2007\_209\_001\_006, TRT: 0:12:50 ?

Marvin Perry talks about his hopes for the future of African Americans in business, and shares his advice on how to succeed in Corporate America. He also reflects upon his legacy and how he would like to be remembered. Perry concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.