

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Terry Mason

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Mason, Terry, 1951-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason,
Dates:	April 20, 2012 and May 2, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2012 and 2018
Physical Description:	11 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:28:50).
Abstract:	Chief medical officer Dr. Terry Mason (1951 -) organized healthier communities for African Americans. Mason was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 20, 2012 and May 2, 2018, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_049
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chief Medical Officer, Terry Mason was born on September 13, 1951 in Washington, D.C. Mason attended Loyola University in Chicago and received his B.S degree in biological science. He earned his M.D. degree from the Abraham Lincoln School of Medicine at the University of Illinois. Mason completed his residency of General Surgery at the University of Illinois Metropolitan Group Hospitals Program and his residency of urology at the Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center.

Upon completing his residencies, Mason started his practice of urology with Dr. Harvey J. Whitfield as Terry Mason MD, SC. At Mercy Hospital and Medical Center he developed a specialty service for male erectile dysfunction, and prostate cancer. In approximately 1992, Mason became radio host of “Doctor in the House” WVON 1690 AM. The following year he founded Center for New Life, a business dedicated to integrating diet modification, and exercise to treat chronic diseases. In 2004, he launched the Restar4Health campaign. The campaign encouraged the public to stop unhealthy eating habits and to make smart food choices. In 2005, Mason became the commissioner of health for the city of Chicago. As Commissioner, he was responsible for over 1200 employees with an annual operating budget of approximately 200 million dollars. Mason has detected and managed health threats to the citizens of the City of Chicago, and held over seventy-five press conferences.

In 2009, Mason retired as Commissioner of public health, and became the System Chief Medical Officer. He served as interim chief executive officer for the Cook County Health and Hospital System from May 2011 until October 2011. He advised and led a team of medical experts on matters of public health importance. He has also served as national chairman of urology at the National Medical Association, and the Midwest regional chair for Chicago’s National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer. Mason is a member of the Cook County Physicians Association and was featured in the film “Forks over Knives” in 2001. Mason’s work has features on My Fox Chicago and Chicago Tonight for American Heart Health month. He has features in *Ebony* Magazine and authored a book titled, *Making Love Again: Renewing Intimacy and Helping Your Man Overcome Impotence*. Mason currently resides in Chicago and has two adult children.

Terry Mason was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 20, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Terry Mason was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 20, 2012 and May 2, 2018, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Chief medical officer Dr. Terry Mason (1951 -) organized healthier communities for African Americans.

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:

Mason, Terry, 1951-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Mason, Terry, 1951- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Chief Medical Officer

HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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. Terry Mason, April 20, 2012 and May 2, 2018. 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 Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_001_001, TRT: 1:31:08 ?

Dr. Terry Mason was born on September 13, 1951 in Washington, D.C. Mason's mother, Clarice Johnson, was born in 1925 in Arkansas. Mason describes his mother's childhood in Arkansas and her migration to Washington, D.C. where Mason and three of his siblings were born. When Mason was an infant, his mother took him and fled D.C. to escape Mason's abusive father, Jessie Mason. Mason spent his childhood in Chicago, Illinois. He describes his earliest

childhood memories of growing up on Chicago's South Side, attending Gillespie Elementary School, and his time with his maternal grandmother's husband, Mr. Perkins, who was a positive influence on his life. His mother remarried Thomas Johnson who was verbally and physically abusive towards her. Mason first learned of his biological father, through a letter from the Veteran's Administration indicating that his father had died. Mason later reached out to his older biological siblings and his father's family. Mason lists his siblings.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_001_002, TRT: 2:30:45 ?

Dr. Terry Mason moved to the Englewood neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois with his mother, Clarice Johnson, and stepfather, Thomas Johnson, in 1958. He describes the sights, sounds, and smells of Englewood in the 1960s. He worked at a grocery store as a child to help support his family and he was baptized at New Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago. Mason attended Charles R. Drew Elementary school and Carrie Jacobs Bond Upper Grade Center. His middle school science teacher and mentor, Louis Wright, helped encourage his interest in science. Mason entered Chicago Vocational High School in the Avalon Park neighborhood in 1965. His stepfather was verbally and physically abusive towards his mother, and they eventually separated. His mother, Clarice Johnson, moved alone to the north Side of Chicago, where Mason eventually joined her when he was sixteen. Mason describes his stepfather's drinking and behavior towards him and he reflects upon his family structure.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_001_003, TRT: 3:32:01 ?

Dr. Terry Mason worked as a butcher in Joseph Bingham's grocery store and as an attendant at the adjacent Laundromat during high school. He remembers the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 and talks about experiencing racism in Chicago, Illinois. Mason was on the National Honor Society and senior class president at Chicago Vocational High School. He describes his career interests and his focus of electronics. He graduated from high school in 1969, and was admitted to Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois. Mason talks about his introduction to Black Nationalism as an undergraduate. He participated in Communiversity, discussions at the Center for Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University with HistoryMaker Harold Pates, and visited the Universal School of Meditation with HistoryMaker Phil Cohran. He was elected president of the Loyola University African-American Student Association, LUASA, and describes fundraising for LUASA with HistoryMaker and radio personality Herb Kent.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_001_004, TRT: 4:30:54 ?

Dr. Terry Mason attended "Communiversity," weekend black studies courses at the Northeastern Illinois University Center for Inner City Studies, with educator-activists Dr. Bobby Wright, Dr. Anderson Thompson, and HistoryMaker Harold Pates. Mason describes his introduction to the Nation of Islam, and his conversion to Islam while at Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois. The Nation of Islam influenced his decision to practice medicine and prevented him from dropping out of college. Mason describes Black Nationalist philosophy within the organization, and talks about the Nation of Islam's work within Chicago's black communities in the 1970s and 1980s. He lists his mentors and talks about black physicians serving black communities in Chicago. Mason met his full-siblings for the first time on a trip to Washington, D.C. during college. He also talks about his mother's, Clarice Johnson's, migration from Washington D.C. to Chicago, Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_001_005, TRT: 5:30:17 ?

Dr. Terry Mason talks about the Nation of Islam's businesses in Chicago, Illinois, Alabama and Michigan, such as the Your Supermarket, a full-sized grocery store the Nation of Islam established on the South Side of Chicago. He describes the teachings of the Nation of Islam and the emergence of HistoryMaker Minister Louis Farrakhan, and he explains how HistoryMaker Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright helped him reestablish his Christian faith. Mason was expelled from the College of Nursing at Loyola University in Chicago, but readmitted into the College of Arts and Sciences as a biology major by Dean Elliott J. Burrell. Despite problems with his application, in 1974, Mason was accepted into the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He talks briefly about the Project '75 minority medical school enrollment initiative started by Dr. Andrew Thomas, and describes his experience in medical school and his graduation in 1978. Mason describes his reunion with older siblings at his mother's funeral.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_002_006, TRT: 6:29:37 ?

Dr. Terry Mason began medical school at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine in 1974. The following year, he took the first part of his national board examination, which he passed on his second attempt. Mason graduated in 1978, and went on to complete two years of general surgery internship at Mercy Hospital and Illinois Masonic Medical Center. After working at the Westside VA Hospital, Mason chose to specialize in urology. He spent five years at Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center, and was the first African American resident to specialize in urology there. He and his attending Harvey J. Whitfield, Sr. were rejected by the hospital staff. Mason was a member of the National Medical Association (NMA), and served as president of both the Student NMA and the local NMA chapter, the Cook County Physicians Association. Additionally, Mason describes changes in dietary norms and the importance of the NMA. He also remembers the research reputation of Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_002_007, TRT: 7:32:23 ?

Dr. Terry Mason completed his urology training in 1983. During his studies, Mason became particularly interested in the study of erectile dysfunction. While working at Mercy Hospital under the direction of Sister Sheila Lyne, Mason authored his first book 'Making Love Again: Renewing Intimacy and Helping Your Man Overcome Impotence.' He went on to open a private urology practice, where he worked alongside female urologist Traci P. Beck. During this time, Mason found a connection between erectile dysfunction and other health conditions such as cardiac arrest and stroke. At this point in the interview, he talks about different radiation therapy methods for prostate cancer. He goes on to describe how early erectile dysfunction medications functioned and the effects of saturated fats on the endometrial tissue in blood vessels. He also talks about the challenges of revitalizing communities struggling with long term socioeconomic, health and education concerns, specifically on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_002_008, TRT: 8:29:30 ?

Dr. Terry Mason became the host of the WVON Radio program 'Doctor in the House' in 1991 after his guest appearances on one of the station's other shows. Mason's show extended beyond medicinal health topics to include discussions about familial and socioeconomic health issues. In 2002, Mason founded the Center for New Life, which took a holistic approach to treating erectile dysfunction and prostate cancer. Two years later, Mason began the Restart for health program with Mayor Richard M. Daley, encouraging individuals in the

Chicagoland area to pursue a vegetarian diet during the month of January. The Center for Life closed in 2006. That same year, Mason was approached by various members of Chicago's city government to serve as commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health. Mason also talks about a memorable call on his radio program, and the importance of fostering trust with patients. Additionally, he describes the formation of HMOs, and considers necessary changes in U.S. healthcare.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_002_009, TRT: 9:30:04 ?

Dr. Terry Mason joined the Chicago Department of Public Health in 2006. There, he oversaw 1,500 employees, and worked alongside entomologists for mosquito control, environmental scientists and food safety professionals. During that time, Mason also served as the emergency preparedness commissioner for Chicago, Illinois. In 2009, Mason was approached by the Cook County Health and Hospital System to direct its public health department. At this point in the interview, Mason describes the correlation between decreased bowel movements and increased risks of breast cancer as well as the importance of a proper diet for colon cancer prevention. He also details statistics of unhealthy food consumption that lead to dietary problems in the United States, and the positive impact of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 on single men and women in the State of Illinois. Mason recalls conducting an open heart surgery operation in an emergency room while working at Provident Hospital of Cook County.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_002_010, TRT: 10:29:25 ?

Dr. Terry Mason became chief medical officer of the Cook County Health and Hospital System in 2006. He later served as the interim CEO for six months, during which time he was responsible for 6,600 employees and labor union negotiations. While there, he acted as president of the Cook County Physicians Association. Mason also served as the regional director of the National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer, where he worked alongside Dr. David Satcher and met W. Montague Cobb. Additionally, Mason was involved with the Chicago Area Health and Medical Careers Program and the Urban Health Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Medicine. As the COO of the Cook County Department of Public Health, he worked with a variety of restaurants, townships and school and hospital systems. In addition, Mason describes the impact of STI prevention, gun violence and poor education systems on public health in Chicago, Illinois. He also describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Terry Mason, Section A2012_049_002_011, TRT: 11:22:46 ?

Dr. Terry Mason talks about influential health programs in Chicago, Illinois, and the importance of grooming the next generation of black medical leaders. He goes on to talk about the high cost of education for medical students. Mason also describes the importance of black entrepreneurs supporting one another, and the role religion plays in regulating one's dietary habits. At this point, he reflects upon his life and legacy, and describes his family and his plans for the future. To conclude the interview, he reflects upon how he would like to be remembered.