

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lewis E. Dodley

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dodley, Lewis E., 1940-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lewis E. Dodley,
Dates:	April 6, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:38:31).
Abstract:	Motivational speaker and youth advocate Lewis E. Dodley (1940 -) was an expert on youth violence and drug prevention. He founded the SIMBA Circle, an Afrocentric rites of passage program for young African American men. Dodley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 6, 2012, in Columbus, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_103
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Youth Advocate and Motivational Speaker Lewis E. Dodley was born on December 25, 1940 in Columbus, Ohio. He graduated from East High School in Columbus and went on to attend Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio. Dodley has received extensive training to become a Violence Prevention Certification Specialist and a Certified Chemical Dependency Counselor (CCDCIII). He is also a Certified Afrocentric National Rites of Passage Elder and Trainer.

Dodley joined Ohio's Department of Youth Services in 1960 as a staff development trainer. Ten years later, he also began serving as director of family services for Rosemont Family Center. Dodley received his Ph.D. degree in psychology and guidance counseling from the Ohio State University in 1981. Since 1984, he has served as a trainer and consultant for Youth to Youth International, a drug and violence prevention organization. In 1987, Dodley became a project director and consultant for Salesian Boys Club. He organized the Simba Circle in 1993, a two-week male rites of passage program for African American youth, and heads the Outward Bound Program for the Simba Circle. Also in 1993, Dodley became a consultant for the Columbus Public Schools. From 2004 to 2011, he held the position of drug prevention coordinator for the Columbus Health Department. Dodley serves as a licensed counselor for the Federal TRIO Programs' Upward Bound Program and a senior consultant for the Harambee Leadership Academy, Inc. He has over twenty years' experience in criminal justice, children's services, violence prevention, therapeutic intervention and drug prevention. With his expertise, Dodley is a sought-after speaker around the country including presenting at the Ohio Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel OAEOPP Student Leadership and Professional Conference and the S.A.V.E. (Stand Against a Violent Environment) Rapid City Youth Conference.

Dodley has been recognized for his commitment to youth issues and violence prevention including receiving the Community Against Violence and Abuse Award in 2005. He also has been recognized by the Columbus Urban League. Dodley was a member of the Raising the African-American Potential (RAAP) Leadership Committee in

2006. He has four adult children, Lewis, Traci, Mark and Kimberly.

Lewis E. Dodley was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 6, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lewis E. Dodley was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 6, 2012, in Columbus, Ohio, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Motivational speaker and youth advocate Lewis E. Dodley (1940 -) was an expert on youth violence and drug prevention. He founded the SIMBA Circle, an Afrocentric rites of passage program for young African American men.

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:

Dodley, Lewis E., 1940-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dodley, Lewis E., 1940- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Motivational Speaker

Youth Advocate

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|EducationMakers

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 Lewis E. Dodley, April 6, 2012. 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 Lewis E. Dodley, Section A2012_103_001_001, TRT: 1:29:06 ?

Lewis E. Dodley was born on December 25, 1940 in Columbus, Ohio to Lueatta Stewart Dodley and Gilbert Dodley, Sr. His mother was born to Emma Stewart Price in Luray, Virginia, where her step-father, William Price, was a preacher. When she was young, her family migrated north and settled in Columbus, Ohio. Dodley's father was born to Blossie Dodley and Susie Dodley in Dalton, Georgia. His parents eventually decided to leave the segregated South, and moved with the family to Columbus, Ohio, where Dodley's paternal grandfather worked in construction. Dodley's father was drafted into World War II, and worked as a motor pool mechanic. After the war, his father secured positions at the Timken Roller Bearing Company factory and at a Standard Oil Company service station. Dodley's mother worked in domestic service, and Dodley occasionally accompanied her to homes in the affluent and predominantly white suburb of Bexley, Ohio.

Video Oral History Interview with Lewis E. Dodley, Section A2012_103_001_002, TRT: 2:29:31 ?

Lewis E. Dodley grew up in a historically black neighborhood on the East Side of Columbus, Ohio. His family lived on Talmadge Alley, and patronized the black-owned businesses on Mount Vernon Avenue, including Mr. Brooks' barbershop, where Dodley was mentored by the older members of the African American community. From an early age, Dodley sold the Night Green, which was a local black newspaper affiliated with the Ohio Sentinel. Dodley began his education at the integrated Douglas Elementary School, where he befriended Gerald Perez, who lived in a Latino neighborhood on the West Side. At this point in the interview, Dodley talks about the segregated neighborhoods in Columbus, and remembers his parents' desire for him to attend an integrated school. He also talks about his father's service in World War II, which began when Dodley was one year old. He recalls meeting his father at Columbus Union Station when he returned from the war in 1946.

Video Oral History Interview with Lewis E. Dodley, Section A2012_103_001_003, TRT: 3:29:45 ?

Lewis E. Dodley attended Champion Middle School in Columbus, Ohio, where he was active in sports and the industrial arts program. He was also an original member of the Four Mints, and sang in local black talent pageants. After enrolling at East High School in Columbus, Dodley joined the men's glee club, as well as the debate, track and football teams. He graduated from high school in 1958, and was recruited to play football at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio, which was located twenty miles from Columbus. During his freshman year of college, Dodley's girlfriend, Constance Jenkins, became pregnant with their first child, and the couple married soon afterwards. Dodley left college to work at the Timken Roller Bearing Company with his father, Gilbert Dodley, Sr., who encouraged him to return to school. Eventually, Dodley enrolled at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. He separated from his wife because of her alcoholism, and raised their three children as a single father.

Video Oral History Interview with Lewis E. Dodley, Section A2012_103_001_004, TRT: 4:30:04 ?

Lewis E. Dodley studied education and guidance counseling at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. While a student, he also worked at the Ohio Department of Youth Services. Dodley graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1968, and then found work as a recreational youth leader. Later that year, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, and Dodley helped the children in the recreation program process their grief. He decided to continue his education, and pursued a master's degree and Ph.D. degree in psychology at The Ohio State University. He was mentored by Afrocentric psychologist Moriba Kelsey, who assisted Dodley with his master's degree thesis on parenting skills for troubled youths. Dodley completed his Ph.D. degree in 1981. Additionally,

Dodley talks about the influential leaders of the black community in Columbus during the late 1960s and early 1970s, like author Anna Bishop and Principal J. Arnett Mitchell.

Video Oral History Interview with Lewis E. Dodley, Section A2012_103_001_005, TRT: 5:30:22 ?

Lewis E. Dodley completed his Ph.D. degree in psychology and guidance counseling in 1981 at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. After graduation, he continued to work for the Ohio Department of Youth Services in Columbus. He also became involved with several youth drug prevention and substance abuse programs, including Youth to Youth International, Children of Alcoholics, Adult Children of Alcoholics and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.). In 1993, Dodley created the Safe in My Brothers' Arms Circle (SIMBA Circle), which was a two-week rites of passage program for ten-year-old African American boys. At this point in the interview, Dodley describes the stages of the SIMBA Circle program, which began by dispelling negative ideas about black masculinity and included a fire log ritual. The program also focused on Afrocentric principles like kuumba. The curriculum was influenced by the work of black psychologists like Na'im Akbar, Linda James Myers and Moriba Kelsey.

Video Oral History Interview with Lewis E. Dodley, Section A2012_103_001_006, TRT: 6:30:16 ?

Lewis E. Dodley created the Safe In My Brother's Arms Circle (SIMBA Circle) program in 1993. The program continued at the time of the interview, and served over one hundred African American boys each year. Dodley incorporated black psychological research with African history and culture to create the rites of passage, which took place over a two-week period. He designed the program to include aspects of traditional African culture like drumming and mask making to help the youth develop a sense of identity. In addition, Dodley created a rites of passage program for former prison inmates that focused on social skills and job retention. The program was affiliated with the Columbus Urban League's Father 2 Father program, which worked to foster and restore family bonds between fathers and their children. Dodley was also recognized by the Columbus Urban League for his work with the SIMBA Circle, and was awarded The Father of the Village Award.

Video Oral History Interview with Lewis E. Dodley, Section A2012_103_001_007, TRT: 7:29:43 ?

Lewis E. Dodley founded the Safe In My Brother's Arms Circle (SIMBA Circle) in 1993. Thirteen years later, he helped Lashonda Curry create the Safe In My Sister's Arms Circle (SIMSA Circle), which was based in Chicago, Illinois. Dodley and his staff trained the SIMSA Circle leaders in the principles of the rites of passage program, and went on to establish three additional chapters across the Midwest. At this point in the interview, Dodley talks about the value of the Afrocentric principles for people of all ethnicities. He describes the SIMBA Circle and SIMSA Circle's partnerships with organizations like the Franklin County Children Services in Columbus, Ohio, and talks about the private donors who helped individual participants obtain funding to attend the program. Dodley reflects upon his family and legacy, and concludes this part of the interview by talking about his grandchildren and his love of fishing.

Video Oral History Interview with Lewis E. Dodley, Section A2012_103_001_008, TRT: 8:09:44 ?

Lewis E. Dodley describes how he would like to be remembered. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.