

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dominique Wilkins

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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>	Wilkins, Dominique, 1960-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dominique Wilkins,
<b>Dates:</b>	October 5, 2016
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2016
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (1:49:40).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Basketball player Dominique Wilkins (1960 - ) played for the Atlanta Hawks for most of his career. He was also a nine-time NBA All-Star, and inducted into The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2006. Wilkins was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 5, 2016, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2016_070
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Basketball player Dominique Wilkins was born on January 12, 1960 in Paris, France to John Wilkins, a sergeant in the U.S. Air Force, and Gertrude Baker. Wilkins had seven siblings, including Gerald Wilkins, who also played professional basketball. Dominique Wilkins' family eventually settled in Baltimore, Maryland, where he began playing basketball on the playground while attending Dunbar High School. As a high school sophomore, Wilkins relocated to Washington, North Carolina and played at Washington High School. There, he won two North Carolina Class 3-A Championships in 1978 and 1979, and was voted as state MVP in both seasons. Wilkins enrolled at the University of Georgia, where he played basketball for three years, and was awarded as SEC Player of the Year in 1981.

Wilkins was drafted third in the 1982 NBA Draft by the Utah Jazz, and subsequently traded to the Atlanta Hawks. Wilkins was the Hawks' leading scorer for most of his twelve seasons with the franchise. He was selected to play in the NBA All-Star Game for nine consecutive years from 1986 to 1994, and led the league in scoring during the 1985-1986 season. Wilkins, nicknamed "The Human Highlight Film," was particularly known for his dunking skills, especially his signature two-handed windmill dunk. He won the NBA Slam Dunk Contest twice, in 1985 and 1990, and placed second two other times. The Hawks qualified for the playoffs in nine of Wilkins's twelve seasons with the team. Leaving the Atlanta Hawks in 1994, Wilkins went on to play for the Los Angeles Clippers, Boston Celtics, San Antonio Spurs, Orlando Magic and the Greek team Panathinaikos, with whom he won the 1996 Euroleague Final Four championship. When Wilkins retired from the NBA in 1999, he held the ninth position in total points scored in the league's overall history. The Hawks retired Wilkins' #21 jersey in 2001; and Wilkins became the team's vice president of basketball in 2004.

Wilkins was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2006, entered the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in 2004, the Atlanta Sports Hall of Fame in 2005 and the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016. He has worked with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and the National Diabetes

Education Program to promote diabetes prevention, and was also active with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Special Olympics, Muscular Dystrophy Association and the American Lung Foundation. He is also a diabetes ambassador for Novo Nordisk, a world leader in diabetes care. Wilkins is represented in front of State Farm Arena in the form of an 18,500-pound bronze statue erected in March, 2015.

Dominique Wilkins was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 5, 2016.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dominique Wilkins was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 5, 2016, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Basketball player Dominique Wilkins (1960 - ) played for the Atlanta Hawks for most of his career. He was also a nine-time NBA All-Star, and inducted into The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2006.

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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:

Wilkins, Dominique, 1960-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wilkins, Dominique, 1960---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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## Occupations:

Basketball Player

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

SportsMakers

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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 Dominique Wilkins, October 5, 2016. 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 Dominique Wilkins, Section A2016\_070\_001\_001, TRT:

1:28:51 ?

Dominique Wilkins was born on January 12, 1960 in Paris, France to Gertrude Wilkins Baker and John Wilkins, Sr. His mother was one of eighteen children, and grew up in Washington, North Carolina, where she completed high school. Wilkins father was also raised in Washington, where he met Wilkins' mother. After they married, Wilkins' father joined the U.S. Army, and was stationed in Paris, France. He and Wilkins' mother lived in the Latin Quarter, where Wilkins was born. After his father was assigned to Fort George G. Meade, Wilkin and his family moved to Baltimore, Maryland. There, Wilkins grew up in Westport, and attended Hampstead Hill Junior High School and Patterson High School. After his parents divorced, Wilkins moved to Washington, North Carolina to finish his diploma at Washington High School. There, he played on the basketball team, and lived temporarily with his coach and later with his grandparents. Additionally, Wilkins talks about his signature basketball moves and his athletic training regimen.

Video Oral History Interview with Dominique Wilkins, Section A2016\_070\_001\_002, TRT: 2:22:17 ?

Dominique Wilkins attended Washington High School in Washington, North Carolina. There, he played against future NBA members like Buck Williams and Mitchell Wiggins, and held the quarter mile track record. In addition, Wilkins worked after class, and saved enough money to buy a home for his mother, Gertrude Wilkins Baker. After graduating in 1979, Wilkins decided to leave North Carolina, and enrolled at the University of Georgia. In retaliation, he and his family were harassed by the community, who expected talented athletes to play in the Atlantic Coast Conference. After arriving at the University of Georgia, Wilkins played with Lamar Heard, Derrick Floyd, Terry Fair and Robert Miles under Coach Hugh Durham. In 1982, Wilkins joined the NBA draft, where he was selected as the third overall draft pick by the Utah Jazz. That year, he was traded to the Atlanta Hawks. The team made the NBA playoff semifinals in 1985, and were the NBA scoring champions in 1987. Additionally, Wilkins remembers his first slam dunk.

Video Oral History Interview with Dominique Wilkins, Section A2016\_070\_001\_003, TRT: 3:27:36 ?

Dominique Wilkins played for the Atlanta Hawks in the Eastern Division of the NBA from 1982. At the time, the team's biggest competitors were the Boston Celtics and the Chicago Bulls. Wilkins won the NBA Slam Dunk Contest in 1985. He also began using his high school nickname, Human Highlight Film, which he received at the Five-Star Basketball Camp. In 1992, Wilkins injured his Achilles tendon, but eventually made a full recovery. Two years later, he was traded to the Los Angeles Clippers by Stan Kasten and Pete Babcock. After one year, Wilkins joined the Boston Celtics, and then led the Greek Panathinaikos BSA Athens basketball club to the EuroLeague championship in 1996. He also played with Fortitudo Pallacanestro Bologna 103 in Italy, before returning to the NBA. Wilkins retired from the Orlando Magic in 1999. At this point in the interview, Wilkins talks about his favorite basketball moves, plays and scoring strategies. He also remembers playing with Spud Web, and talks about team ownership controversies.

Video Oral History Interview with Dominique Wilkins, Section A2016\_070\_001\_004, TRT: 4:27:35 ?

Dominique Wilkins joined the Orlando Magic in 1998, and played for the team for one year before retiring in 1999. Afterwards, he returned to Atlanta, Georgia and joined the executive staff of the Atlanta Hawks organization. He eventually

rose to the position of vice president, and also began designing basketball courts in partnership with CBA Sports. In 2015, Wilkins was honored by the City of Atlanta with a statue at the Philips Arena. At this point in the interview, Wilkins talks about the changes in basketball gameplay, including the introduction of flagrant foul rules. He describes the importance of a good team environment, and talks about friendships among basketball players. Wilkins also talks about his commercial deal with Reebok International Ltd, and the differences between basketball shoe brands. Additionally, Wilkins shares his advice to young black men and aspiring basketball players. He talks about his plans for the future, and names the players on his ideal Dream Team.

Video Oral History Interview with Dominique Wilkins, Section A2016\_070\_001\_005, TRT: 5:03:21 ?

Dominique Wilkins reflects upon his legacy and family, and concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.