

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lester McKeever

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McKeever, Lester H., 1934-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lester McKeever,
Dates:	May 19, 2000
Bulk Dates:	2000
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:51:01).
Abstract:	Accountant Lester McKeever (1934 -) is a civic finance leader and was appointed chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. McKeever is also the treasurer of the University of Illinois Board of Trustee. McKeever is a partner at the accounting firm Washington, Pittman & McKeever. McKeever was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 19, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2000_031
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lester McKeever was born on June 15, 1934, in Chicago and was raised in the city. McKeever graduated from Douglas Elementary School and Wendell Phillips High School. He was educated at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and studied law at the Illinois Institute of Technology-Chicago Kent College of Law.

After law school, McKeever joined the accounting firm of Washington & Pittman, thus beginning a long career. In 1976, McKeever was elected to Washington & Pittman's Board of Directors as a managing partner and eventually the firm was renamed Washington, Pittman & McKeever. A passionate civic leader, McKeever has served on the Finance Committee under Chicago mayors Harold Washington and Richard M. Daley. In 1997, he made history when he was appointed chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. With this position he oversees bank operations in Chicago.

In 1993, McKeever was elected to the Illinois Institute of Technology's Board of Directors. McKeever is also the treasurer of the University of Illinois Board of Trustee. McKeever has served as board chairman for the Chicago Urban League and is an active member of the Metropolitan Planning Council and the Neighborhood Institute Development Corporation. His wife, Nancy, is a former Chicago public school teacher. They have two children, Steven and Susan, both of whom are lawyers.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lester McKeever was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on May 19, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Accountant Lester McKeever (1934 -) is a civic finance leader and was appointed chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. McKeever is also the

treasurer of the University of Illinois Board of Trustee. McKeever is a partner at the accounting firm Washington, Pittman & McKeever.

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:

McKeever, Lester H., 1934-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
McKeever, Lester H., 1934---Interviews

African American accountants--Interviews

Children of divorced parents--United States

University of Illinois at Chicago

Accounting--United States--History

Art--Collectors and collecting--Illinois--Chicago

Horse racing--United States

Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Accountant

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Lester McKeever, May 19, 2000. 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 Lester McKeever, Section A2000_031_001_001, TRT: 0:29:54 ?

Accountant Lester McKeever describes his hardscrabble life in 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. He discusses his parents' divorce and its effect upon the quality of life of his family. McKeever also reveals how a benevolent couple, the Beasleys, ensured a college education would be available to him when his own family was unable to send him to school. McKeever then discusses his time at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

African American accountants--Interviews.

Children of divorced parents--United States.

University of Illinois at Chicago.

Accounting--United States--History.

Art--Collectors and collecting--Illinois--Chicago.

Horse racing--United States.

Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Lester McKeever, Section A2000_031_001_002, TRT: 0:30:03 ?

Accountant Lester McKeever continues to describe his experience at the University of Illinois at Chicago, focusing on his social life and fraternity. McKeever then talks about jobs he held immediately after graduation and two years of military service. After describing his successful efforts to become a certified public accountant (CPA), McKeever gives a detailed history of the accounting profession, focusing on the first black CPAs.

Video Oral History Interview with Lester McKeever, Section A2000_031_001_003, TRT: 0:20:23 ?

Accountant Lester McKeever discusses African American art and explains why he is an art collector. He then has a lengthy discussion about his family and how his wife and children have been integral to his success. After expressing his hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflecting on his career, McKeever discusses his involvement and investment in horse racing.

Video Oral History Interview with Lester McKeever, Section A2000_031_001_004, TRT: 0:30:41 ?

Accountant Lester McKeever talks about the start of his accounting career at the firm of Washington & Pittman, and details his success. McKeever's achievements for the firm, including his emphasis on community service, led to his being appointed managing partner in 1976. The firm's name was changed to Washington, Pittman & McKeever. McKeever reflects on the achievements of the firm under his watch as a managing partner, and then considers the future for African American accountants. After remembering his mentors, McKeever discusses his tenure on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Bank.