

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Charles Willie

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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>	Willie, Charles Vert, 1927-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Charles Willie,
<b>Dates:</b>	February 13, 2001
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2001
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:46:12).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Professor and sociologist Charles Willie (1927 - 2022) was an expert in the area of school desegregation. Willie served as a court-appointed master, expert witness, and consultant in many school desegregation cases. Willie was an applied sociologist and the author or editor of more than thirty-five books and one hundred articles covering topics such as race relations, urban education, public health, community development, family life, and women's rights. Willie was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 13, 2001, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2001_079
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Professor and sociologist Charles Vert Willie was born in Dallas, Texas, on October 8, 1927. Willie attended Morehouse College, where he graduated in 1948. The following year, he received a master's degree from Atlanta University, and in 1957, he obtained a Ph.D. degree in sociology from Syracuse University. At Syracuse, Willie served as chair of the Department of Sociology and vice president of the university, at a time when few African Americans were holding such positions. He then was hired by Harvard University in 1974, where he served as the Charles William Eliot Professor of Education at the Graduate School of Education.

Charles Willie was one of the nation's leading black sociologists. His expertise was in the area of school desegregation. Accordingly, Willie served as a court-appointed master, expert witness, and consultant in many school desegregation cases. In 1975, Willie served as a court-appointed master in the Boston school desegregation case, and he later was retained to develop a controlled choice student assignment plan for Boston and several school districts. He was recognized in 1983 with the Society for the Study of Social Problems' Lee-Founders Award for effectively combining social research and social activism.

Willie was an applied sociologist concerned with solving social problems. He was the author or editor of more than thirty-five books and one hundred articles covering topics such as race relations, urban education, public health, community development, family life, and women's rights. His books include *A New Look at Black Families* (1976), *The Education of African-Americans* (1991), *Theories of Human Social Action* (1994), and *Mental Health, Racism and Sexism* (1995). Willie served as vice president of the American Sociological Association and as president of the Eastern Sociological Society. In addition, Willie also served on the boards of the Social Science Research Council, the Fetzer Foundation, the Dana Greely Foundation, and the Boston Museum of Science, among others;

the technical advisory board of the Maurice Falk Medical Fund; and, by the appointment of President Jimmy Carter, the President's Commission on Mental Health.

Willie formally retired from Harvard in 1999 but continued to teach part-time for another decade. He also served as the vice president of the House of Deputies in the Episcopal Church USA, where he preached the sermon for the ordination of the first 11 women priests in the Episcopal Church. Willie received honorary doctoral degrees from fifteen colleges and universities including Syracuse University, Haverford College, the Episcopal Divinity School, Emerson College, Morgan State University, and Beacon College. Morehouse College awarded him the Bennie Service Award, and Syracuse University awarded Willie its George Arents Pioneer Medal and later honored him with the Chancellor's Citation Lifetime Achievement Award. The American Sociological Association awarded Willie its DuBois-Johnson-Frazier Award, the William Foote Whyte Distinguished Career Award, and the W.E.B. DuBois Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award. The Eastern Sociological Society honored him with its Merit Award and established an annual award in his name.

Charles Willie was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 13, 2001.

Willie passed away on January 11, 2022, at the age of 94.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Charles Willie was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on February 13, 2001, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Professor and sociologist Charles Willie (1927 - 2022) was an expert in the area of school desegregation. Willie served as a court-appointed master, expert witness, and consultant in many school desegregation cases. Willie was an applied sociologist and the author or editor of more than thirty-five books and one hundred articles covering topics such as race relations, urban education, public health, community development, family life, and women's rights.

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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:**

Willie, Charles Vert, 1927-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

## **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Willie, Charles Vert, 1927---Interviews

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African American sociologists--Interviews

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Harvard University--Faculty--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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Harvard University. Graduate School of Education

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## **Occupations:**

Sociologist

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Education Professor

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

EducationMakers

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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 Charles Willie, February 13, 2001. 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 Charles Willie, Section A2001\_079\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:51 ?

Charles Vert Willie shares anecdotes of his family background, a family that rose from the ashes of slavery in Louisiana and Texas. He describes his childhood in Texas and his parents' professions as a Pullman Porter and schoolteacher. Willie examines the role his birth order played in shaping his personality and worldview.

African American sociologists--Interviews.

Harvard University--Faculty--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles Willie, Section A2001\_079\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:45 ?

Charles Vert Willie expands upon his childhood years and some of the challenges he faces in matriculating into college on his parents' limited financial budget for five children. Willie talks about his siblings, including his brothers' experiences in college. Willie then describes his own college experience at Morehouse College.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles Willie, Section A2001\_079\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:03 ?

Charles Vert Willie details his collegiate years at Morehouse College, including a description of his classmate, Martin Luther King, Jr. Willie explains how his mentor guided him to attaining a master's degree and Ph.D. He describes the politics of advancement in the academic field, and details his rapid rise at Syracuse University. He also mentions how Harvard University worked to bring him into its fold.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles Willie, Section A2001\_079\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:27 ?

Charles Vert Willie discusses several pivotal events during his academic career where he was instrumental in seeing justice served. From his time as a vice president at Syracuse University, he forced the hand of the administration to hire a black assistant coach after all the black football team members were cut from the team for protesting. Willie also details his role in addressing the school desegregation problems in Boston, Massachusetts.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles Willie, Section A2001\_079\_001\_005, TRT: 0:31:06 ?

Charles Vert Willie details his sociological theory of complementarity, wherein

he discusses the socioeconomic differences between poor whites and blacks and their areas of commonality. The segment closes with Willie's reflections on his life and his legacy, as he recounts his greatest achievements and expresses his concerns for the future of African Americans. Willie then narrates his personal photographs as they are recorded on videotape.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles Willie, Section A2001\_079\_001\_006, TRT: 0:17:00 ?

Charles Vert Willie narrates his personal photographs as they are recorded on videotape.