

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with N. John Douglas

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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>	Douglas, N. John, 1938-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with N. John Douglas,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 29, 2002
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2002
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:47:20).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Broadcast chief executive N. John Douglas (1938 - ) worked as a research scientist at Lockheed Research Laboratories in Palo Alto, California and is now the CEO of Personal Achievement Radio. Douglas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 29, 2002, in San Francisco, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2002_034
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Broadcast chief executive N. John Douglas was born in New York City in 1938, the son of Mae, a registered nurse, and John, a teller. In 1960, Douglas received his B.S. degree in physics from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. At Bates, he participated in athletics and still holds the long jump record for a New England college athlete.

After earning his M.S. degree in physics from Howard University in 1962, Douglas worked as a senior scientist at Lockheed Research Laboratories in Palo Alto, California. He worked there until 1968, winning the Lockheed Corporation Publication Award in both 1967 and 1968. Douglas entered the world of business in 1968 at the Bank of America, becoming the first African American security analyst at a major financial institution. That same year, he studied business administration at the University of Santa Clara and investment analysis and management at the University of California, Berkeley. Douglas continued working as a security analyst and in managerial positions, for various companies and brokerage houses until 1981.

Since then, Douglas has been highly successful in the field of broadcast programming and operations. In 1981, he founded KSTS-TV, Channel 48 in San Jose, California, the first African American-owned television station in the United States. He also served as the creator and news director of *Business Today*, the first nationally syndicated daily business news program to air on stations in the top five markets and on a cable network reaching six million homes. Douglas is also the founder and chairman of Douglas Broadcasting, Inc., a twenty-five station radio broadcast group created in 1989.

Presently, Douglas is the president and CEO of AIM Broadcasting. AIM focuses on ethnic audiences with radio stations throughout the United States.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with N. John Douglas was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on March 29, 2002, in San Francisco, California, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Broadcast chief executive N. John Douglas (1938 - ) worked as a research scientist at Lockheed Research Laboratories in Palo Alto, California and is now the CEO of Personal Achievement Radio.

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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:

Douglas, N. John, 1938-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Douglas, N. John, 1938---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:

Broadcast Chief Executive

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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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 N. John Douglas, March 29, 2002. 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 N. John Douglas, Section A2002\_034\_001\_001, TRT: 0:26:43 ?

N. John Douglas describes his family background. Douglas' mother, Esther Douglas, was born in New Jersey and worked as a registered nurse. Douglas' father, John Douglas, was born in Granada and moved to the United States after a United States Army Major offered him a job. After graduating from Hampton University, Douglas' father worked as a teller at Chemical Bank on Wall Street for the rest of his life. Douglas' maternal grandmother Bambi also helped raise him. Douglas and his sister Joan were raised in the mostly white, middle-class neighborhood of Englewood, New Jersey, where they encountered little racial prejudice. Douglas attended Dwight Morrow High School and remembers being

shy, interested in athletics, and wanting to become an accountant or a physicist.

Video Oral History Interview with N. John Douglas, Section A2002\_034\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:08 ?

N. John Douglas describes his education. In 1956, Douglas graduated from Dwight Morrow High School and enrolled at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine on a basketball scholarship. At Bates, his interests in physics were nurtured. He was also active in sports, playing football, basketball, and track. During his sophomore year, Douglas used his knowledge of physics to set the New England record for the long jump and got the opportunity to meet Jesse Owens. Douglas remembers Bates College as a predominately white school that was not prejudiced against black students, but his social life centered on Boston, where he visited regularly and pledged the Omega Psi Phi fraternity. After graduating with his B.S. degree in physics in 1960, Douglas enrolled at Howard University for graduate school, where he had a more active social life and his own research lab. Douglas received his M.A. degree in physics from Howard in 1962.

Video Oral History Interview with N. John Douglas, Section A2002\_034\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:16 ?

N. John Douglas discusses his career as a research physicist and financial analyst. After graduating from Howard University in 1962 with his M.S. degree in physics, Douglas became a research physicist for Lockheed Research Laboratories in Palo Alto, California, where he worked on projects in the Thermal Physics Department. Dissatisfied with the possibilities for advancement within Lockheed, Douglas became a security analyst for Bank of America in 1968. Afterwards, he worked at a series of companies and brokerage houses including International Strategy and Investment, Bear Stearns, Reynolds and Company, and James Capel until becoming Director of Investor and Public Relations at Castle and Cooke, Inc. around 1974. Douglas reflects on his role as one of the first black analysts at a major financial institution in the United States and how his focus on being successful in business kept him from experiencing prejudice at work.

Video Oral History Interview with N. John Douglas, Section A2002\_034\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:47 ?

N. John Douglas discusses his career at Castle and Cooke, Inc. and as owner of the KSTS-TV station. Now known as Dole Food Company, Castle and Cooke provided Douglas with the opportunity to grow at a major international company, travel, and gain knowledge about the world from 1974 until 1980. Douglas remembers taking charge of the annual report for the company, negotiating with the United Farm Workers and Cesar Chavez in California, and using his understanding of people to creatively market the company. After becoming dissatisfied with the opportunity for advancement within the company, Douglas pursued a career as a broadcast entrepreneur. In 1981, Douglas started KSTS-TV in San Jose, California, which was the second black-owned TV station in the country after WGPR-TV in Detroit. Douglas successfully ran KSTS-TV and served as news director for its 'Business Today' program until he sold the station to Saul Steinberg and Telemundo in 1987.

Video Oral History Interview with N. John Douglas, Section A2002\_034\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:43 ?

N. John Douglas discusses his career in television and radio broadcasting. Douglas reflects on the difficulty of starting a black-owned tv station, the close knit community he developed there, and the programs he produced including 'Headline News' with BET, 'Magic Number Video,' and 'College Bounders.' In 1989, he started Douglas Broadcasting where he specialized in radio stations that provided programing for ethnic populations in New York City, California, Chicago, Texas, and Seattle. While running Douglas Broadcasting, Douglas helped start the Z-Spanish Radio Network and created the first trimulcast to strengthen its audience. In 1996, Douglas started Personal Achievement Radio,

which is broadcast on ABC AM radio networks and five satellite radio stations. Douglas reflects on the importance of black-owned businesses, his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and his legacy as a pioneer who helped others.

Video Oral History Interview with N. John Douglas, Section A2002\_034\_001\_006, TRT: 0:22:43 ?

N. John Douglas narrates his photos.