

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Palmer, Lutrelle Fleming
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II,
Dates:	May 22, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:21:03).
Abstract:	Community activist and newspaper reporter Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II (1922 - 2004) spent fifty years galvanizing and informing the black community as a reporter, syndicated columnist, newspaper publisher and radio commentator. From 1983 until his retirement in 2001, Palmer hosted an issues-oriented talk show. As a community activist, he founded the Chicago Black United Communities in 1979, and the Black Independent Political Organization in 1981. Palmer was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 22, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_087
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Called the godfather of Chicago black political activism, Lutrelle Fleming "Lu" Palmer, Jr. was born March 28, 1922, in Newport News, Virginia, to Myrtle and Lutrelle, a school principal. While his two older sisters opted for careers in education, Palmer became a journalist when he arrived in Chicago in 1950 with a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. "The Panther with a pen" spent fifty years galvanizing and informing the black community as a reporter, syndicated columnist, newspaper publisher and radio commentator. From 1983 until his retirement in 2001, Palmer hosted an issues-oriented talk show.

Palmer came to Chicago in 1950 as a reporter for the Chicago Defender. He wrote for other newspapers, including the Chicago Daily News, where he also served as a syndicated columnist and editor for the Nashville, Tennessee, based Tri-State Defender. He founded the Black X-Press Info-Paper in Chicago. He was a recruiter, organizer and preceptor for the Associated Colleges of the Midwest from 1970 to 1990.

Sometimes Palmer's positions caused him to quit or lose a job. Illinois Bell canceled its sponsorship of Palmer's twelve-year old radio show in 1983 when he became an outspoken supporter of Harold Washington, who, with Palmer's help, became Chicago's African American mayor. As a community activist, he founded the Chicago Black United Communities in 1979, the Black Independent Political Organization in 1981, and served as chairman of the Extended Services Program for the Group Living Facilities for Boys in 1998-all of which are still in existence.

Palmer's scores of honors include: Chicago State University Black Writers' Hall of Fame, induction into the Black Journalists Hall of Fame, the Jomo Kenyatta Award for Political Activism, the Outstanding Service/ Community Information Award, Grambling State's Outstanding Service Award, Bell Labs' Black Achievement Against the

Odds Award, 1982, and the Proclamation of Unity Award, 1976.

Palmer received a journalism degree from Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia in 1942 and a master's degree from Syracuse University in 1948. He and his wife, Jorja English Palmer, lived in Chicago's South Side. They have seven children. Palmer passed away on September 12, 2004.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 22, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Community activist and newspaper reporter Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II (1922 - 2004) spent fifty years galvanizing and informing the black community as a reporter, syndicated columnist, newspaper publisher and radio commentator. From 1983 until his retirement in 2001, Palmer hosted an issues-oriented talk show. As a community activist, he founded the Chicago Black United Communities in 1979, and the Black Independent Political Organization in 1981.

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:

Palmer, Lutrelle Fleming

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Palmer, Lutrelle Fleming --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Community Activist

Newspaper Reporter

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|MediaMakers

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 Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II, May 22, 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).

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 Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II, Section A2002_087_001_001, TRT: 0:29:44 ?

Community activist and journalist Lu Palmer describes his parents backgrounds and explains how they met. Palmer also details the educational career of his father, Lutrelle Palmer Sr., who took over the African American high school in Newport News, Virginia, and transformed it into one of the finest high schools in the country. Palmer also talks about how his father dealt with prejudice based on his success with the school

Video Oral History Interview with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II, Section A2002_087_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Community activist and journalist Lu Palmer shares memories of his childhood in Newport News, Virginia, continuing to share memories of his father and his father's impact on the African American community there. Palmer talks about his experience in high school and discusses his college choice.

Video Oral History Interview with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II, Section A2002_087_001_003, TRT: 0:29:51 ?

Social activist and journalist Lu Palmer discusses his time in higher education. Palmer describes his social life at Virginia Union University, explains his decision to attend Syracuse University to study journalism, and evaluates his academic experience there. Palmer also explains why he left his Ph.D. studies to work in black journalism, and talks about his time in Memphis at the 'Tri-State Defender'.

Video Oral History Interview with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II, Section A2002_087_001_004, TRT: 0:29:18 ?

Community activist and journalist Lu Palmer details his time as a reporter at white newspapers 'Chicago's American' and the 'Chicago Daily News'. Palmer describes many incidents of racism he faced while at those papers, and explains how he used his reporting to combat it. Palmer explains why he left white papers to start his own paper, 'The Black X-Press', and his own radio show. Palmer discusses the difficulties he had securing advertising and printing for the 'X-Press' thanks to racial discrimination.

Video Oral History Interview with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II, Section A2002_087_001_005, TRT: 0:30:58 ?

Community activist and journalist Lu Palmer talks about the slant of his newspaper 'The Black X-Press', which was a strong advocate for black nationalism and independence. Palmer then reflects on the negative effects of integration and the Civil Rights Movement on African Americans. Palmer discusses how he was able to further promote activism and black independence on his radio show, 'Lu's Notebook'. Palmer explains the formation of Chicago Black United Communities and talks about how this organization helped to elect the first black school board president in Chicago's history.

Video Oral History Interview with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II, Section A2002_087_001_006, TRT: 0:30:19 ?

Community activist and journalist Lu Palmer details the campaign to elect an African American as mayor of Chicago, an effort which culminated in Harold Washington's election in 1983. Palmer explains the strategies that he and the Chicago United Black Communities organization employed in selection Washington as a candidate, and discusses how he and other black activists galvanized black Chicagoans into action, registering nearly 150,000 to vote.

Palmer also talks about the career sacrifices he made in order to endorse Washington.

Video Oral History Interview with Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, II, Section A2002_087_001_007, TRT: 0:20:53 ?

Community activist and journalist Lu Palmer evaluates Harold Washington's time as mayor of Chicago and talks about what he could have done to make Washington's tenure more valuable for African Americans in Chicago. Palmer also discusses his role in advocating for Wallace Davis, a victim of police brutality. Palmer then considers his legacy and how he would like to be remembered.