

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Henry Soles

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Soles, Henry
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Henry Soles,
Dates:	August 23, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:15:05).
Abstract:	Chaplain Reverend Henry Soles (1935 - 2018) was the senior chaplain of the Chicago Bulls basketball team. Soles was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 23, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_161
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

The Reverend Henry Soles, Senior Chaplain of the Chicago Bulls, dedicated his career to community improvement. He served as Associate Minister to DuPage County A.M.E. Church in Lisle, Illinois and was the corporate consultant for the Chicago-based Owens Group. Aside from being a respected community leader, Rev. Soles was an award-winning editor, a journalist for a New York City daily newspaper and a television personality as former host of an Emmy-nominated talk show.

As the chaplain for the Chicago Bulls, Soles lead pre-game Christian chapel services and helped the athletes reflect upon their lives away from the basketball court. Rev. Soles was the founding Board Chairman of DuPage County Housing Association, a nonprofit agency providing 260 housing units for low and moderate-income persons and founding trustee of the DuPage Prayer Breakfast Committee. He served on the boards of various organizations, including: Chicago-based Gospel Outreach, Serenity House, Chicago Mental Health Council, DuPage Prevention Partnership, Mid-America Leadership Foundation, Wheaton-Carol United Way, DuPage Housing Authority and Wheaton History Center.

Rev. Soles received numerous awards, honors and recognitions for his work, including: the Serenity House Man of the Year Award in 1997, the 2001 Adult Citizen of the Year Award from the City of Wheaton, and a Lifetime Achievement in Media Award from the DuPage A.M.E. Church. He was profiled in numerous local and national publications and was a much sought-after inspirational speaker.

Soles passed away on January 18, 2018 at age 82.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Henry Soles was conducted by Adele Hodge on August 23, 2002, in

Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Chaplain Reverend Henry Soles (1935 - 2018) was the senior chaplain of the Chicago Bulls basketball team.

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:

Soles, Henry

Hodge, Adele (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Soles, Henry--Interviews

Chaplains--Interviews

Television talk show hosts--Interviews

African American editors--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Chicago Bulls (Basketball team)

Occupations:

Chaplain

HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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 Reverend Henry Soles, August 23, 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 Reverend Henry Soles, Section A2002_161_001_001, TRT: 0:30:28 ?

Henry Soles was born on August 17, 1935 in Anniston, Alabama. He describes

his family background. His mother, Pearlie Mae Soles, was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. She was a domestic worker and a factory worker. Soles' maternal grandmother, Mary Allen, was a religious woman who had family living in Chicago, Illinois. His father, Henry Soles, Sr. was born outside of Selma, Alabama. He worked in the steel industry. Soles' paternal grandmother, Joanna Soles, worked as a mid-wife and was present at his delivery. When Soles was a young boy, his family moved from Alabama to Plainfield, New Jersey in search of better opportunities. Soles remembers his grade school years and being influenced by teachers like Mrs. Switzgable and Mrs. Link. Soles shares childhood memories of segregation and his uncle's lynching. He also talks about his two siblings and his curious childhood personality.

Chaplains--Interviews.

Television talk show hosts--Interviews.

African American editors--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Henry Soles, Section A2002_161_001_002, TRT: 0:31:14 ?

Henry Soles graduated from Plainfield High School in Plainfield, New Jersey. He describes the socioeconomic and racial discrimination he experienced in high school where Soles participated in track, Spanish Club, and the Old Testament Club. He also developed an interest in politics after he was named Mayor for a Day in Plainfield. Soles' family became involved in the church after moving from Alabama to New Jersey. Soles attended Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey before enrolling at the Manhattan Bible Institute in New York, New York to pursue his dream of becoming a minister. During this period, Soles had the opportunity to work at the New York Bible Society's exhibit during the 1964 World's Fair. Soles talks about the March on Washington in 1963 and reflects on the work of civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. Soles also talks about working as an insurance agent and how he became a reporter at the New Brunswick Daily Home News.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Henry Soles, Section A2002_161_001_003, TRT: 0:30:31 ?

Henry Soles describes his career as a journalist. He worked at the New Brunswick Daily Home News during the 1967 Plainfield riots. During his coverage of an African American automotive union, Soles resisted pressure from the FBI to report anti-American activity. Soles' exposure of a condominium developer's discriminatory practices prevented the developer from obtaining a contract in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Soles was then hired at Scripture Press in Wheaton, Illinois where he worked with Urban Ministries, Inc. to develop Sunday school curriculum for African American youth. The curriculum received national recognition. Then, in 1971, Soles met his wife, Effie Soles, who was also an ordained minister. Although they did not have children of their own, Soles and his wife love kids and are active mentors. Soles also talks about his job offer from the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and its conductor, Henry Lewis, the first African American conductor of a major symphony orchestra. Soles is the associate minister at DuPage A.M.E. Church in Lisle, Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Henry Soles, Section A2002_161_001_004, TRT: 0:31:15 ?

Henry Soles began working as the chaplain for the Chicago Bears in 1974 where players like Walter Payton and Mike Singletary as well as coach Mike Ditka visited his chapel. In 1979, Soles moved to the Chicago Bulls at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois where he interacted with celebrities like Michael

Jordan, Jay Leno, Denzel Washington, Tiger Woods, Spike Lee, and Prince. His work with professional athletes gave Soles insight into the unique psychological and spiritual challenges facing professional athletes. Soles also conducted sports ministry for high schools and colleges. From the 1970s, Soles has held a bible study programs for in downtown Chicago. He compares the needs of professional athletes to those of businesspeople. He describes his experience in Nairobi, Kenya with NBA players.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Henry Soles, Section A2002_161_001_005, TRT: 0:31:14 ?

Henry Soles recalls his first trip to Africa with the NBA and his visits to Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Liberia. He shares the story of another chaplain's scary encounter with a lion during the trip. Soles has led many retreats in and out of the sports world. His ministry has largely grown via referrals and he has worked with people across many industries including sports, entertainment, and politics. Soles describes the differences between the professional athletes of today and before. From 1979 to 1981, Soles hosted an Emmy-nominated talk show which gave him the opportunity to meet Princess Margaret. Soles also talks about Tiger Woods, the Promise Keepers, memorable ministry experiences, and giving back to his community.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Henry Soles, Section A2002_161_001_006, TRT: 0:31:13 ?

Henry Soles describes his involvement with the Promise Keepers, a Christian movement for men founded by Bill McCartney. He also shares his discovery of ethnic divisions between Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Ethiopian Jews during his travels to Israel. Soles reflects on his accomplishments, how he would like to be remembered, and challenges he faced as a minister. When Soles was a child of about eight, his uncle was lynched. Soles describes his memory of the event and how his faith helped him to cope with its aftermath. Soles also talks about Emmett Till, reparations, and an experience with the Ku Klux Klan in Wheaton, Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Henry Soles, Section A2002_161_001_007, TRT: 0:09:10 ?

Henry Soles describes a memorable experience preaching in New York's Times Square with a diverse group of ministers. He also reflects upon his legacy and formative moments in his life including his marriage to wife, Effie Soles, his world travels, and his work as a chaplain for the Chicago Bulls.