

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Norman Francis

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Francis, Norman C., 1931-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Norman Francis,
Dates:	November 14, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:17:50).
Abstract:	University president Norman Francis (1931 -) served as president of Xavier University of New Orleans for thirty-four, one of the longest terms of any university president in the United States. Francis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 14, 2002, in New Orleans, Louisiana. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_198
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator and institution builder, Norman C. Francis was born March 20, 1931, in Lafayette, Louisiana. His father, a barber and his mother, a homemaker, sacrificed to send him to St. Paul Catholic elementary and secondary schools. After graduation, Francis attended Xavier University in New Orleans. At Xavier University, Francis began an association that would last a lifetime. Graduating with a B.S. in 1952, Francis was admitted to Loyola University Law School, where he earned a J.D. in 1955. He spent 1956 to 1957 in the U.S. Army's Third Armored Division.

Recruited to return to Xavier, Francis served as dean of men in 1957 and in 1963 was hired as director of student personnel services. In 1964, he was promoted to assistant to the president, in 1967 to executive vice President and in 1968 to president of Xavier University. His presidency has been marked by unparalleled growth. Francis created a campus that is referred to locally as the "Emerald City" because of its aqua/green roofs. The campus' tall structures include a \$15 million Library Resources Center, a 430-bed, \$13 million dorm, and a \$23 million Science Complex, including a new School of Pharmacy. Over the past six years, Xavier has had 470 graduates accepted to medical schools. Enrollment has jumped 35 percent during this same period, to more than 4,000 students.

Francis' thirty-four years as president is among the longest of any college president in the United States. Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Jesse Jackson and Pope John Paul II have come to New Orleans to commend Francis. His awards include twenty-two honorary degrees and major awards from the UNCF, the National Urban League, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In 1986, he was named one of the 100 Most Effective College Administrators in America.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Norman Francis was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 14, 2002, in New Orleans, Louisiana, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. University president Norman Francis (1931 -) served as president of Xavier University of New Orleans for thirty-four, one of the longest terms of any university president in the United States.

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:

Francis, Norman C., 1931-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Francis, Norman C., 1931---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Xavier University (New Orleans, La.)

Occupations:

University President

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Norman Francis, November 14, 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 Norman Francis, Section A2002_198_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00 ?
Norman Francis remembers his mother and father and describes each of their personalities and jobs they had. He talks about the segregated South where he grew up but hits upon the positive aspects of his small community more than the negative. Francis details the sense of care and lovingness he received from his family in their teachings and life lessons.

Video Oral History Interview with Norman Francis, Section A2002_198_001_002, TRT: 0:30:20 ?
Norman Francis talks about the scholarship he received to attend Xavier

University of Louisiana. Next, he explains how Katharine Drexel founded the university as he details her background and shows his gratitude for her life's work. Francis tells how Drexel helped open the doors for blacks in attaining high profile positions. He remembers the war veterans who attended Xavier and how they inspired and influenced him. Francis then talks about integrating Loyola University New Orleans School of Law and remembers how an instance of discrimination gave his white fellow law students a new view of segregation. Norman Francis talks about his long-time friend, Louisiana politician 'Moon' Landrieu and then explains how he became involved in civil rights advocacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Norman Francis, Section A2002_198_001_003, TRT: 0:31:05 ?

Norman Francis discusses his experience of integrating Loyola University New Orleans law school and discusses how his presence as a talented black law student broke down stereotypes of black inferiority--a positive effect for his own self-esteem as well as the worldview of white students. He particularly mentions his friendship with Moon Landrieu, later Mayor of New Orleans, and his opposition to segregation. Next, Francis explains how he was involved with helping Freedom Riders find shelter after their journey through the South. He then talks in detail about the turbulent 1960s and the roles he played in desegregation. Norman Francis describes the significance of education. He describes experiences as president of Xavier University of Louisiana and talks about the daily challenges he faces. Norman Francis explains how he stays in close contact with the students of Xavier by answering questions directly from the student body.

Video Oral History Interview with Norman Francis, Section A2002_198_001_004, TRT: 0:28:15 ?

Norman Francis discusses his past considerations of running for mayor of New Orleans. Next, he states his hopes and concerns for the black community in New Orleans. After considering his legacy, Francis explains how each of his parents dealt with his career successes. Then, he talks about his children and gives their professions. Norman Francis explains how he'd like to be remembered and then discusses his future plans with Xavier University of Louisiana.

Video Oral History Interview with Norman Francis, Section A2002_198_001_005, TRT: 0:19:10 ?

Norman Francis narrates photos documenting his life.