

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with David R. Duerson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Duerson, David, 1960-2011
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with David R. Duerson,
Dates:	August 28, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:08:43).
Abstract:	Football player and corporate chief executive David R. Duerson (1960 - 2011) is a former NFL player who is now CEO and owner of Duerson foods, sausage maker to Burger King and others. Duerson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 28, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_210
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Former NFL player-turned-business owner David Duerson was born in Muncie, Indiana, on November 28, 1960. After graduating from Northside High School in Muncie, Duerson began his promising football career at the University of Notre Dame. Duerson spent the summers from 1979 to 1981 working as a law clerk in Miami, Florida, and during the summer of 1982, he served as legislative aide to U.S. Senator Richard Lugar. Duerson graduated from Notre Dame with a B.S. degree in economics in 1983.

Following graduation, Duerson joined the Chicago Bears, where he played from 1983 to 1989, earning his first Super Bowl ring in Super Bowl XX. In 1990, he joined the New York Giants, and that year the Giants won Super Bowl XXV. He then went on to play for the Phoenix Cardinals from 1991 to 1993. After leaving the NFL, Duerson decided to go into business through franchise ownership. He attended McDonald's Corporation's Hamburger University and in 1994 bought three McDonald's restaurants in the suburbs of Louisville, Kentucky. Selling his franchises in 1995, Duerson became president and CEO of Fair Oaks Farms, one of the primary suppliers of sausage to McDonald's and a number of other companies with an international distribution arm to Japan, Singapore, Turkey and Kuwait. Under his leadership, sales grew from \$38 million in 1998 to \$63.4 million in 2001. That same year, he earned an executive M.B.A. from Harvard University's Owners and Presidents Management Program.

In 2002, Duerson started Duerson Foods, providing pork and turkey sausage products to corporations such as Burger King, White Castle and SYSCO.

Duerson has earned a number of honors over the years, including being named two-time All-American at Notre Dame and the 1987 NFL Man of the Year. He serves on the University of Notre Dame Board of Trustees and as chairman of the National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame, Chicago Chapter. He is also active with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, serving as a national trustee. Duerson and his wife, Alicia, have four children.

Duerson passed away on February 17, 2011.

Duerson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 28, 2003.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with David R. Duerson was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 28, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Football player and corporate chief executive David R. Duerson (1960 - 2011) is a former NFL player who is now CEO and owner of Duerson foods, sausage maker to Burger King and others.

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:

Duerson, David, 1960-2011

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Duerson, David, 1960-2011--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

National Football League.

Occupations:

Football Player

Corporate Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers|SportsMakers

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 David R. Duerson, August 28, 2003. 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 David R. Duerson, Section A2003_210_001_001, TRT: 0:29:13
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David Duerson describes his mother's background and traces her roots back to the late 1700s. Then he talks in depth about his father and his origins, explaining the story of his slave ancestors. He also details his father's career success, stating awards he won and jobs he held. David Duerson remembers his hometown of Muncie, Indiana.

Video Oral History Interview with David R. Duerson, Section A2003_210_001_002, TRT: 0:30:40
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David Duerson discusses his mother's life, giving details on her childhood and some of her hobbies. He then speaks about an early memory, a family car trip to Richmond, Kentucky. Duerson then recalls his childhood home of Muncie, Indiana and explains the importance of basketball there. Next, he describes some of his juvenile tendencies in which he and his friends were involved. Duerson talks about his early sports memories playing baseball, football and basketball, mentioning teams he played for and people with whom he played. He tells about his experience in Muncie at an integrated elementary school and then remembers influential teachers.

Video Oral History Interview with David R. Duerson, Section A2003_210_001_003, TRT: 0:29:20
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David Duerson talks about his high school days and describes his value system that kept him out of trouble. He then talks about highlights from high school and remembers experiences of being in the school band. David Duerson then details his high school athletic accomplishments. Next, he explains how he became interested in Notre Dame and how he eventually ended up there to play football. Duerson discusses his continued involvement with the University of Notre Dame and tells about being a part of their selection committee. Then he recalls Notre Dame teammates and their athletic exploits. David Duerson talks about his decision in choosing to play football over baseball and basketball.

Video Oral History Interview with David R. Duerson, Section A2003_210_001_004, TRT: 0:30:00
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David Duerson discusses his NFL draft day and talks about the reason he was not selected in the first round. He then speaks on being selected by the Chicago Bears and his early relationship with Mike Ditka. He then talks about working under Buddy Ryan and some of the troubles he faced in dealing with him. Duerson then tells how he learned to cope with the racism and difference of opinions with Ryan. He goes in depth and reveals the inner workings of the Chicago Bears coaching staff. Next, Duerson talks about teammate Jim McMahon, citing examples why he felt he was an effective player on and off the field. David Duerson describes Buddy Ryan's coaching skills.

Video Oral History Interview with David R. Duerson, Section A2003_210_001_005, TRT: 0:09:30
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David Duerson remembers the end of his career with the Chicago Bears and then talks about his decision to play for the New York Giants. He also discusses his admiration of Bill Parcells.