

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Fred C. Matthews, III

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Matthews, Fred C., III, 1942-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Fred C. Matthews, III,
Dates:	December 3, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:30:27).
Abstract:	Nonprofit executive Fred C. Matthews, III (1942 -) has served as the director of the Youth Employment and Training Orientation Center, district director, and as executive director for the YMCA. As district director, he developed the Chernin Center for the Arts, and was appointed vice president of community relations of the Metropolitan YMCA. Matthews was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 3, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_285
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

YMCA executive Fred C. Matthews III was born March 4, 1942, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Matthews spent his youth at the Branco-Clark YMCA in Baton Rouge. He attended Valley Park and Perkins Road elementary schools and graduated from McKinley High School in 1958, where he was an honor student and president of the Louisiana State Student Council. Matthews went on to Southern University, where he graduated with a B.A. in sociology in 1962, and received a commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army. He completed his military service with the rank of captain.

In 1966, after six months as a Chicago eighth grade teacher, Matthews was hired at the YMCA in Chicago as the director of the Youth Employment and Training Orientation Center. In 1971, he was appointed district director of the YMCA's South District, thus becoming the youngest area YMCA chief. In 1985, Matthews became executive director of the Duncan YMCA. Here he developed programs to fight infant mortality and joblessness, and worked to establish the \$3 million Chernin Center for the Arts, with a 220-seat theatre, art gallery, dance studio, town meeting room and other amenities. Matthews was appointed vice president of community relations for the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago in 1993 and became a member of the corporate staff. Matthews, a Rotarian and a Kiwanian is a member of a number of organizations, including: 100 Black Men, Inc., Southern University Alumni Association, Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation, the Chicago Department of Human Services Committee, Operation PUSH, and Grant Memorial A.M.E. Board of Trustees.

In 2003, the YMCA recognized Matthews' contributions by naming a new building the Fred C. Matthews III Senior Center in his honor. Still active after thirty-eight years with the YMCA, Matthews and his wife of thirty-nine years, Roslyn, have two daughters.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Fred C. Matthews, III was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 3, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit executive Fred C. Matthews, III (1942 -) has served as the director of the Youth Employment and Training Orientation Center, district director, and as executive director for the YMCA. As district director, he developed the Chernin Center for the Arts, and was appointed vice president of community relations of the Metropolitan YMCA.

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:

Matthews, Fred C., III, 1942-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Matthews, Fred C., III, 1942- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

YMCA of the USA

Occupations:

Nonprofit Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Fred C. Matthews, III, December 3, 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 Fred C. Matthews, III, Section A2003_285_001_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Fred C. Matthews, III was born on March 4, 1942 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His mother, Vivian Wills Matthews, was born in Torras, Louisiana, a small town in Pointe Coupee Parish, northwest of Baton Rouge. Matthews' maternal

grandmother worked as a seamstress in Baton Rouge. His father, Fred Cleveland Matthews, Jr., was born in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. Matthews' paternal grandfather pastored Magnolia Baptist Church in Baton Rouge. He also was a door-to-door insurance salesman. Matthews was delivered by a midwife and an attending physician Dr. Leo Stanley Butler, known as the "Dean of Black Physicians," at his maternal grandmother's house. Matthews narrates his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Fred C. Matthews, III, Section A2003_285_001_002, TRT: 0:30:45 ?

Fred C. Matthews, III's paternal family were farmers in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana before moving to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Matthews' father worked in a hotel then became a laborer for Standard Oil. He ascended the company ranks to a management position and oversaw the company health association as union steward. Matthews' father earned his GED later in life and was active in civic and Baptist church organizations, such as the 4th District Missionary Baptist Association of Louisiana. After graduating from McKinley Senior High School, Matthews' mother attended Leland College, a Baptist school in Baker, Louisiana. Matthews' parents were married for fifty-seven years. Matthews was raised in South Baton Rouge where he attended Valley Park Elementary School, Perkins Road Elementary School, and McKinley Junior High School. In 1957, he met Clark Gable and Carole Lombard while serving drinks at a cast party for 'Band of Angels.' Matthews' family knew Dr. Valerian Smith and HistoryMaker Reverend Gardner Taylor.

Video Oral History Interview with Fred C. Matthews, III, Section A2003_285_001_003, TRT: 0:29:32 ?

Fred C. Matthews, III grew up in South Baton Rouge, Louisiana with his parents and two siblings. Matthews' father and Reverend W.K. Brooks built Brooks Park for the city's black youth. Matthews began school in Baton Rouge at Valley Park Elementary. After taking classes at the Southern University Laboratory School, he skipped the third grade. He then attended Perkins Road Elementary School, where Wickliff Bassett was one of his teachers, and McKinley Junior High School. Matthews helped label "free ride" cars during the 1953 Baton Rouge bus boycott organized by Reverend T.J. Jemison. In 1954, he entered McKinley Senior High School. He managed the school's boys' basketball team, and was elected student body president as a junior, thanks in part to the support of basketball player Cincinnatus Powell. In 1958, he graduated from high school and enrolled at Southern University, in Baton Rouge, where he was elected vice president of the sophomore class and joined ROTC and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

Video Oral History Interview with Fred C. Matthews, III, Section A2003_285_001_004, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Fred C. Matthews, III studied sociology at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He joined ROTC and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity; was elected vice president of his sophomore class; acted in a student production of 'A Raisin in the Sun;' and marched in support of student protestors conducting sit-ins in Baton Rouge in the spring of 1960. Upon his graduation from Southern University in 1962, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army; he was stationed at the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course at Fort Benning, Georgia before shipping out to South Korea in 1963. He served as a battalion communication officer with the 2nd Battalion 7th Cavalry in the DMZ. Matthews completed his Army service at Fort Dix, New Jersey in 1965. In 1966, he began working as a jobs counselor for the YMCA in Chicago, Illinois.

Matthews was appointed YMCA district director of Chicago's Near South District in 1971. He joined BAN-WYS, a coalition focused on developing services for minority communities.

Video Oral History Interview with Fred C. Matthews, III, Section A2003_285_001_005, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Fred C. Matthews, III was appointed YMCA district director of Chicago, Illinois' Near South District in 1971 at twenty-nine years old. Matthews later became director for the Far South District. During the 1970s and 1980s, he oversaw facilities such as Camp Martin Johnson and the Governors State University YMCA. During his tenure, Matthews also supported programs such as preschool childcare; West Side Future, which focused on reducing infant mortality; and the popular Youth Basketball Association. In 1974, he started the Black Achievers Program with Wardell Haywood. Matthews became executive director of Chicago's Duncan YMCA in 1985. He introduced arts programs into the YMCA's community initiatives through a partnership with Columbia College Chicago. He also built the Chernin Center for the Arts at the Duncan Y. Matthews talks about the character and community building functions of the YMCA. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflects upon his legacy.