

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Calvin Darden

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Darden, Calvin, 1950- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Calvin Darden, |
| Dates: | March 22, 2004 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2004 |
| Physical Description: | 3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:19:40). |
| Abstract: | Corporate executive Calvin Darden (1950 -) was the senior vice-president of U.S. operations of the United Parcel Services, responsible for the pick-up and delivery of 13.5 million packages per day from eight million customers. Darden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 22, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2004_033 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Calvin Darden, senior vice-president of U.S. operations of the United Parcel Services, was born February 5, 1950, in Buffalo, New York. He was a scholarship recipient and graduate of Canisius College, where he began his career working part-time at the local UPS terminal. After graduating in 1972 with a B.S. degree in business management, he became a full-time employee with the company.

Darden's first responsibilities at UPS were to load and unload trailers at the Buffalo hub. In January of 1974, he was promoted to customer service supervisor. Soon after, he became the hub manager and later managed three packaging centers. After twelve management positions and six location moves, Darden had built a reputation for making distribution centers more efficient, improving service and boosting employee morale. In Nashville, Tennessee, he increased the center's efficiency from 65 percent to almost 100 percent. In 1993, he was promoted to vice-president and regional manager of a nine-state region based in California.

In 1995, Darden moved to the headquarters in Atlanta as the company's first quality coordinator. He developed and implemented the quality strategy, which focused on customer satisfaction, employee empowerment, process improvement and effective methods of measurement. He has been credited with the introduction of the company's trademark policies and innovations. Also, he has added the technology that allowed the company to begin delivering to central points. He has been working with UPS for over thirty years and ensures the pick-up and delivery of 13.5 million packages a day from eight million customers.

Darden has been committed to the community by starting a chapter of the Black Executive Exchange Program at UPS, which travels around the nation to colleges and universities talking to students. He serves on the board of directors for the National Urban League; Target Corporation; Coca-Cola Enterprises; and is on the board of trustees for the Atlanta Police Foundation. In July 2002, Darden was ranked eighth on *Fortune Magazine's* 50 Most Powerful Black Executives in America list. He is also active in his church, serving as chairman of the deacons at

the Deliverance Temple Church of God and Christ in Atlanta, Georgia.

Darden and his wife, Patricia Gail, have been married for more than thirty years. They have three children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Calvin Darden was conducted by Jodi Merriday on March 22, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate executive Calvin Darden (1950 -) was the senior vice-president of U.S. operations of the United Parcel Services, responsible for the pick-up and delivery of 13.5 million packages per day from eight million customers.

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:

Darden, Calvin, 1950-

Merriday, Jodi (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Darden, Calvin, 1950---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United Parcel Service

Occupations:

Corporate Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Calvin Darden, March 22, 2004. 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 Calvin Darden, Section A2004_033_001_001, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Calvin Darden was born on February 5, 1950 in Buffalo, New York to Grover and Jessie Darden. His father was born in 1924 in Coaling, Alabama, and his mother was born in Evergreen, Alabama in 1925. Darden describes his parents' personalities and how they have influenced him. He remembers the sights, sounds and smells of his childhood in Buffalo, his earliest childhood memories, and his personality as a child. As a child, he attended Greater Hope Baptist Church, aspired to be a police officer, and enjoyed tinkering. Darden attended P.S. 16 Elementary School and Woodlawn Junior High. He graduated from Lafayette High School in 1968, and earned a scholarship to Canisius College in Buffalo. In college, he began working part-time at United Parcel Service. He graduated college in 1972 and was offered a full-time job at UPS. In 1993, Darden was promoted to vice president and regional manager of UPS' Pacific Region. He reflects upon the absence of racial diversity in professional and academic spaces.

Video Oral History Interview with Calvin Darden, Section A2004_033_001_002, TRT: 0:30:40 ?

Calvin Darden was promoted to vice president and regional manager of the Pacific Region at United Parcel Service in 1993. He transferred to Atlanta, Georgia as the national strategic quality coordinator in 1995, and was promoted to senior vice president of U.S. operations in 1999. Darden describes his primary responsibilities as an executive, his favorite part of working for UPS and his first managerial opportunity at UPS. Darden also talks about managing frustration and unexpected issues at work, his proudest accomplishment, and mentoring UPS employees and students. Darden started a chapter of the Black Executive Exchange Program at UPS, which sends African American executives to speak to college students. In 2002, he was included on Fortune magazine's list of the Fifty Most Influential Black Executives. Darden shares his advice for aspiring professionals, explains how he maintains work-life balance, and talks about raising his three children.

Video Oral History Interview with Calvin Darden, Section A2004_033_001_003, TRT: 0:19:40 ?

Calvin Darden does community service work at his church in Atlanta, Georgia, Greater Community Church of God in Christ. In 2003, he received an award from the National Urban League and HistoryMaker Marc H. Morial for his work at United Parcel Service (UPS). Darden describes his management style, a typical workday, the state of racial diversity in the workplace in the early 2000s, and his vision for UPS after his tenure. Darden remembers experiencing racial prejudice in Alabama and Florida in the 1960s and 1970s. Darden describes how he would like to be remembered and the value he places on humility. He also describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community.