

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Doug Banks

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## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Repository:</b>           | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616<br>info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com   |
| <b>Creator:</b>              | Banks, Doug, 1958-2016  |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Doug Banks,  |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | October 26, 2004  |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2004  |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:05:30).   |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Radio personality Doug Banks (1958 - 2016 ) was the host of the syndicated, "The Doug Banks Show" on the ABC Radio Network. The show featured DeDe McGuire and CoCo Budda and Banks as the Urban Flava Creator, and boasted high ratings and millions of listeners nationwide. Banks passed away in Miami, Florida on April 11, 2016. Banks was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 26, 2004, in Dallas, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2004_216   |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.   |

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Radio personality Calvin Douglas Banks, Jr., was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on June 9, 1958. His family relocated to Detroit when he was still young, and he attended St. John's Lutheran School and Friends School there, graduating from Southfield High School in 1976. Banks became a popular disc jockey on Southfield High's WSHJ when he was only fifteen. He was offered a full time job in Miami, but his mother wanted him to finish school, so Banks took a part time job at WDRQ in Detroit, where Bill Bailey mentored him. He was enrolled at the University of Michigan in 1976 before being lured by a \$50,000 contract from popular Los Angeles' KDAY, in 1977.

Banks' career brought him briefly to Chicago, then back to KFI in Los Angeles. It was at KLAV in Las Vegas, where he did his first stint as a morning man. Moving to KDIA in San Francisco, Banks was then offered a substantial contract from WBMX (now WVAZ) in Chicago. Banks boosted the morning ratings from a 1.8 share to a 5.6 share. Enticed to join rival WGCI, Banks worked afternoon drive time, but soon returned to mornings from 1987 to 1994. Banks show with Harold Lee Rush and Bonnie DeShong became a radio institution in Chicago. Following a similar path as radio legend Tom Joyner, Banks signed a deal with ABC Radio Networks in Dallas to do a syndicated afternoon drive show, "The Doug Banks Show". The show which targeted audiences 18 to 34 years of age, featured DeDe McGuire and CoCo Budda and Banks as the Urban Flava Creator. This show was heard by millions nationwide.

A recipient of numerous awards, Banks had a track record of being accessible to community organizations. In 2004, "The Doug Banks Show," along with Russell Simmons, Hip Hop Summit Action Network spearheaded the One Mind One Vote campaign urging young people in the cities to vote. Banks lived with his family live in the Dallas area.

Banks passed away on April 11, 2016 at age 57.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Doug Banks was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 26, 2004, in Dallas, Texas, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Radio personality Doug Banks (1958 - 2016 ) was the host of the syndicated, "The Doug Banks Show" on the ABC Radio Network. The show featured DeDe McGuire and CoCo Budda and Banks as the Urban Flava Creator, and boasted high ratings and millions of listeners nationwide. Banks passed away in Miami, Florida on April 11, 2016.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Banks, Doug, 1958-2016

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Banks, Doug, 1958-2016--Interviews

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## Organizations:

## HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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### Occupations:

Radio Personality

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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## 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 Doug Banks, October 26, 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Doug Banks, Section A2004\_216\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

Doug Banks was born on June 9, 1958 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His mother, Kathrine White, was from Demopolis, Alabama and moved to Detroit, Michigan as a teen. She attended Lewis College of Business before working for the Ford Motor Company for thirty years as an assistant to the general manager

of the planning and development division. Banks' mother met his father, Calvin Douglas Banks, Sr., in Philadelphia, where the elder Banks was born and raised. Banks, Sr. was an economics professor. When Banks was eight months old, his parents divorced and he moved to Detroit with his mother. He grew up in a safe middle class black neighborhood on the west side. The editor of Black World and Black Arts Movement figure Hoyt Fuller was a family friend and surrogate uncle to Banks. During the 1967 race riots, Banks and his mother slept on the floor to avoid stray bullets from the National Guard stationed outside their home. Banks reminisces about his grandmother's cooking and her reactions to thunder storms.

Video Oral History Interview with Doug Banks, Section A2004\_216\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:50 ?

Doug Banks was raised in Detroit, Michigan, where he developed an interest in radio early in life. He attended St. John's Lutheran School then Friends School in Detroit, Michigan for elementary school. During his time at Southfield High School in Southfield, Michigan, he became involved in radio due to the impact of a teacher who was a disc jockey for WTAC-AM and the school's state-of-the-art radio station. Banks had a show on the station after school. At sixteen years old, he was hired to answer calls at WDRQ-FM and was soon hosting his own from three a.m. to five a.m. He was later promoted to the six p.m. to ten p.m. slot. After high school, he enrolled at the University of Michigan with the intention of studying law. However, he was given a chance to be a disc jockey for KDAY in Los Angeles, a black radio station, for six weeks. Two weeks into his time there, he decided to stay. Next, Banks worked part-time at KHJ-AM in Los Angeles while also working part-time at its sister station in San Francisco.

Video Oral History Interview with Doug Banks, Section A2004\_216\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Doug Banks worked at KDAY in Los Angeles, a black radio station, before splitting his time between the pop station KHJ-AM in Los Angeles and another in San Francisco. He then moved to Chicago, Illinois and worked at the Oak Park-based WBMX before moving to Las Vegas and taking a salary cut to host the morning show at KLAV. He went to San Francisco in late 1980 to work at KDIA. In 1982, he returned to WBMX and remained until joining Chicago's WGCI in 1985 as the host of its night show. In 1997, WGCI's morning host, Bob Wall, was taken off the air after his arrest, and Banks took over the popular morning show. As the morning host, Banks had the opportunity to meet and interview important figures, including Harold Washington, Michael Jordan and Chaka Khan. Banks laments Washington's early death and reflects on the support he received from Chicago fans, especially after his mother's death. Banks talks about differences between black and white radio stations and salary fluctuations in the radio business.

Video Oral History Interview with Doug Banks, Section A2004\_216\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Doug Banks began his radio career at sixteen; despite his young age, he was well-received and supported by older deejays. From them, Banks learned how successful broadcasters could capitalize on their radio personalities to supplement their salaries. For his part, Banks learned to be responsible with the money he earned, knowing that salaries and success can quickly change in the radio business. His radio show on WGCI in Chicago was very popular and its producer, Harold Lee Rush, ensured that the show balanced its lighthearted content with more serious political coverage. Banks left Chicago and began the nationally syndicated 'Doug Banks Show' for ABC Radio in 1996. Banks reflects on the shift from hip hop to urban adult contemporary on black radio stations, keeping his radio personality relevant for younger listeners, and his life and future plans. He speculates about the future for satellite radio and national

radio personalities. Banks describes his hopes and concerns for the black community.

Video Oral History Interview with Doug Banks, Section A2004\_216\_001\_005, TRT: 0:08:40 ?

Doug Banks reconnected with his estranged father after the birth of his youngest child. In this part of the interview, Bank talks about his children and his approach to raising them. Banks reflects upon his legacy and his status as a nationally-recognized radio personality. He also shares how he would like to be remembered.