

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Earle Bradford, Jr.

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Bradford, Earle, 1946-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Earle Bradford, Jr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	December 20, 2006
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2006
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:21:39).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Energy executive Earle Bradford, Jr. (1946 - ) was CEO of the Community for Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Bradford was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 20, 2006, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2006_185
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Corporate executive Earle Lacour Bradford, Jr. was born on April 25, 1946 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He received his B.A. degree in accounting and economics in 1969 from Dillard University and continued his studies at Cornell University's Johnson School of Management where he received his M.B.A. degree in 1971 while enrolled as a Mobil Oil Fellow. He served as a visiting professor in the Department of Business and Economics at Norfolk State University under its Eminent Scholar Program.

In 1971, Bradford's professional career began with his first position as a senior accountant at Shell Oil Company. Bradford later became the youngest Vice President at Consolidated Aluminum. In 1983, he joined ARCO Metals Company in Rolling Meadows, Illinois as Vice President of Marketing Development and later became Vice President of Planning and Control. Transferring to ARCO Chemical, Bradford joined the Product Management and Marketing Division and was elected an officer of ARCO Chemical and served as Vice President of Public Affairs. He also served as the Vice President of National Accounts Management and Material Management in the Americas before serving as a worldwide Director of Continuous Improvement and Commercial Services. Bradford has held several positions with major international firms including a subsidiary of Alusuisse, the Swiss aluminum company. In 2002, Bradford became President of Axum Partners, Incorporated, which is a consulting company that specializes in corporate development. In 2005, he joined the Community Council for Mental Health and Mental Retardation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as its Chief Executive Officer. He led the organization back from a loss in 2004 to a surplus in 2005.

Bradford is a member and chair of the Board of Directors of Catholic Health East and a member of the board of the Development Credit Fund. He has also served on the boards of the Freedom Theatre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Lincoln University. Bradford was also a member of the Petrochemical Committee of the National Petroleum Refiners Association. He has also received several awards including the Award for Excellence in Market Development from *Sales and Marketing Management* magazine. In 2006, Bradford received the Wilbur Parker Distinguished Alumni Award from the Johnson School of Management at Cornell University.

Bradford resides in Villanova, Pennsylvania with his family.

Bradford was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 20, 2006.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Earle Bradford, Jr. was conducted by Shawn Wilson on December 20, 2006, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Energy executive Earle Bradford, Jr. (1946 - ) was CEO of the Community for Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

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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:

Bradford, Earle, 1946-

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Bradford, Earle, 1946- --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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Atlantic Richfield Co.

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## Occupations:

Energy Executive

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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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 Earle Bradford, Jr., December 20, 2006. 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 Earle Bradford, Jr., Section A2006\_185\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:31  
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Earle Bradford, Jr. was born on April 25, 1946 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Wilhelmine Mohr Bradford and Earle Bradford, Sr. His maternal great-grandmother was the first African American registered nurse in Chicago, Illinois, where his grandfather was born in 1894. Bradford's maternal grandmother was born in 1894 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and had black and Irish ancestry. She died soon after Bradford's mother was born in 1926, and his mother was raised by her father from that time. A graduate of The Ohio State University in Columbus, he went on to serve as the president of Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas, and as director of the Works Progress Administration in Georgia. Bradford's mother met his father in Pensacola, Florida, through her employment with the United Service Organizations. Born in 1924 in St. Joseph, Louisiana, he was the child of an illicit interracial relationship. After serving in the U.S. Navy, he settled with Bradford's mother in New Orleans' 9th Ward.

Video Oral History Interview with Earle Bradford, Jr., Section A2006\_185\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:16  
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Earle Bradford, Jr. spent his early childhood in the 9th Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana. When his family moved to New Orleans' Pontchartrain Park, he transferred from Johnson C. Lockett Elementary School, which was located in the Desire area, to Medard H. Nelson Elementary School. He went on to attend George Washington Carver Junior High School, and then McDonogh No. 35 Senior High School, where he played on the football team. Bradford matriculated at New Orleans' Dillard University, where he studied business and accounting under Professor Thomas E. Crittenden, Jr. He also participated in a summer business program for minority students at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Bradford married Yvette Savvoir Bradford, a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia; and the couple moved to Ithaca, New York, where Bradford enrolled in Cornell University's Graduate School of Business and Public Administration. Bradford also recalls his experiences of discrimination in New Orleans.

Video Oral History Interview with Earle Bradford, Jr., Section A2006\_185\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:01  
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Earle Bradford, Jr. studied business and economics at Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana; and participated in the Intensive Summer Studies Program at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He then received a scholarship from the Mobil Oil Corporation to attend Cornell University's Graduate School of Business and Public Administration in Ithaca, New York. After earning an M.B.A. degree, he worked for two years at the Shell Oil Company in New Orleans, and went on to manage the sales and distribution services division of Johnson and Johnson Products in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Then, he moved with his family to Niagara Falls, New York, where he accepted a position with the Carborundum Company, an abrasives manufacturer. Later, Bradford was recruited by a former colleague to join the Consolidated Aluminum Corporation's marketing team in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1970, Bradford's wife, Yvette Savvoir Bradford, gave birth to Blake Bradford, the oldest of their three sons.

Video Oral History Interview with Earle Bradford, Jr., Section A2006\_185\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:56  
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Earle Bradford, Jr. transitioned to a career in marketing during the 1970s. He initially worked at the Consolidated Aluminum Corporation in St. Louis, Missouri; and then joined the ARCO Metals Company in Chicago, Illinois as a vice president of marketing. In this role, he was responsible for the sale of subsidiary companies like the American Brass Company and Wisconsin

Centrifugal. Then, in the mid-1980s, Bradford became the first black marketing officer at the ARCO Chemical Company. He was promoted to vice president of public affairs, and retired in 1999. Bradford also served as the interim director of The Barnes Foundation and the New Freedom Theatre; and participated in the National Urban League's executive exchange program, where he shared his business experiences with undergraduates at historically black colleges. In addition, he remembers his mentors at the ARCO Chemical Company, including Lodwick Cook, Willard Thomas "Bill" Chamberlain and Harold A. Sorgenti.

Video Oral History Interview with Earle Bradford, Jr., Section A2006\_185\_001\_005, TRT: 0:22:55 ?

Earle Bradford, Jr. integrated the Philadelphia Country Club in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania in the early 1990s. At the time, he was an employee of the ARCO Chemical Company. In the early 2000s, Bradford was asked to serve as a consultant at the Community Council for Mental Health and Mental Retardation, an organization in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania that was faced with financial difficulties. Bradford eventually agreed to serve as the council's CEO, and succeeded in reversing its fiscal losses. He describes the planned renovations to the organization's facility; and also talks about his awards, including Cornell University's Wilbur Parker Distinguished Alumni Award. Bradford shares the lessons that he imparted to his three sons; and reflects upon his legacy, his hopes for the African American community and how he would like to be remembered. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.