

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Louis O'Neil Dore

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dore, Louis O'Neil, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Louis O'Neil Dore,
Dates:	January 31, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:24:06).
Abstract:	Trial lawyer Louis O'Neil Dore (1945 - 2019) was the first African American attorney to make senior partner in a white law firm, and was the only African American plaintiff trial lawyer in Jasper County, South Carolina. Dore was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 31, 2007, in Beaufort, South Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_038
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Trial lawyer Louis O'Neil Dore was the fifth of nine children born to Emily and Hezekiah Dore. He was born on March 14, 1945 in Beaufort, South Carolina. In the 1950s, Dore's father changed the family name to Dore from Doe because he felt that Doe was a common name for anonymous persons. Dore attended Robert Smalls Elementary School and heard Benjamin E. Mays speak at an assembly there. In 1963, Dore graduated from high school and was accepted into Morehouse College. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the commencement speaker at his graduation in 1967. Dore obtained a teacher's certificate from Georgia State College and his J.D. degree from the University of Georgia. He was one of only four African Americans in his law school class.

Dore worked tirelessly to help bring about changes in health and economic development in many areas of South Carolina, including Beaufort, Hilton Head and Daufuskie Island. He worked with the Beaufort-Jasper County Comprehensive Health Department as the legal officer, drafting contracts and deeds, writing grants, obtaining funds and petitioning for African American doctors to have the right to treat patients in local hospitals.

In 1980, Dore was the only African American plaintiff trial lawyer in Jasper County, South Carolina, and he became the first African American attorney to make senior partner in a white law firm. Dore became the managing partner of his own law firm in 1991. Both of his sons are attorneys in his firm.

Dore has served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Penn School, Benedict College, and Beaufort Memorial Hospital, and as a board member of the South Carolina State Board of Education.

Dore lives in Beaufort, South Carolina with his wife, Vernita.

Dore was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 31, 2007.

Dore passed away on September 16, 2019.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Louis O'Neil Dore was conducted by Denise Gines on January 31, 2007, in Beaufort, South Carolina, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Trial lawyer Louis O'Neil Dore (1945 - 2019) was the first African American attorney to make senior partner in a white law firm, and was the only African American plaintiff trial lawyer in Jasper County, South Carolina.

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:

Dore, Louis O'Neil, 1945-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dore, Louis O'Neil, 1945- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Trial Lawyer

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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 Louis O'Neil Dore, January 31, 2007. 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 Louis O'Neil Dore, Section A2007_038_001_001, TRT: 0:28:36
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Louis O'Neil Dore was born on March 14, 1945 in Burton, South Carolina to Emily Eddings Dore and Hezekiah Dore, Sr. His maternal great-grandfather, Dennis Eddings, owned twenty acres of farmland in the rural Frogmore community on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. There, his maternal grandparents, Clement Eddings and Olivia Watson Eddings, made their living

by farming and fishing. While Dore's mother left school after the fifth grade, his maternal uncle, Anthony Harrison Eddings, studied at the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School on St. Helena Island, and became the first African American magistrate in Beaufort County, South Carolina. Dore's paternal grandmother, Delia Doe, was a farmhand in Allendale County, South Carolina, and moved to Burton with her two sons. There, Dore's parents met as teenagers. His father later became a lay minister in the local New Hope Christian Church. Although Dore's father had only a second grade education, he was an autodidact who often studied with his children.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis O'Neil Dore, Section A2007_038_001_002, TRT: 0:28:22
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Louis O'Neil Dore grew up with eight siblings in the close-knit community of Burton, South Carolina, where most residents were members of four or five extended families. His maternal great-grandparents, Rebecca Eddings and Dennis Eddings, were former slaves. They purchased land on St. Helena Island in 1886, which they passed down to their descendants. Dore owned the property at the time of the interview. Dore's paternal grandfather, a white farmer in Allendale County, South Carolina, had two children with his paternal grandmother, Delia Doe. Although Dore never met him, his paternal grandfather maintained a relationship with Dore's father and paternal uncle, James Dore. Dore attended the all-black Robert Smalls School in Beaufort, South Carolina from the first through twelfth grades. He was motivated by his teacher, Doris Mouzon, and his principal, W. Kent Alston, who invited celebrities such as trumpeter Louis Armstrong, opera singer Marian Anderson and boxer Joe Louis to speak to the students.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis O'Neil Dore, Section A2007_038_001_003, TRT: 0:28:47
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Louis O'Neil Dore worked full-time as a curb hop at a drive-in restaurant in Beaufort, South Carolina to support his family and save for his college education. His oldest brother, Hezekiah Dore, Jr., was the first person in their community to attend college, and encouraged Dore to apply as well. Dore learned about Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia from its President Benjamin Mays, who spoke to him and other students at the Robert Smalls School. Dore enrolled at Morehouse College in 1963; and, after his freshman year, became active in the Civil Rights Movement. He joined Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and was a founding member of the Young Democrats of Morehouse College. He also registered voters, and worked on Leroy Johnson and Julian Bond's political campaigns. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at Dore's commencement in 1967. Although Dore was offered an academic scholarship to Clark Atlanta University, he returned home to teach at St. Helena High School in South Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis O'Neil Dore, Section A2007_038_001_004, TRT: 0:28:33
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Louis O'Neil Dore attended the University of Georgia School of Law in Athens, Georgia from 1970, and was one of four African American students in his class. He experienced racial discrimination from a professor who failed him while giving passing grades to white students with lower scores, and from a classmate who used racial slurs. Upon graduating in 1973, Dore returned to Beaufort, South Carolina, where he was the only African American lawyer. He was recruited by community activists Thomas Barnwell and Emory Campbell to serve as a legal officer at the Beaufort-Jasper-Hampton Comprehensive Health Services, Inc. In this role, Dore collaborated with the Penn Center, Andrew

Young and Reverend Jesse L. Jackson on campaigns for local access to clean water, and to allow African American doctors to practice at a nearby hospital. In 1976, Dore became a trial lawyer at the law firm of Moss, Carter, Branton and Bailey in Beaufort. There, he represented clients in the Operation Jackpot drug trafficking trials.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis O'Neil Dore, Section A2007_038_001_005, TRT: 0:29:48
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Louis O'Neil Dore was the first African American chairman of the Beaufort County Democratic Party, and later belonged to the Executive Council of the South Carolina Democratic Party under Chairman Don Fowler. He also served as the chairman of the South Carolina State Board of Education, where he was instrumental in reforming the Education Improvement Act of 1984. Dore was a senior partner at Moss, Dore, Kuhn McIntyre, P.A. for sixteen years, and then left to open his own firm, Dore Law Offices, with his sons, Anthony Dore and Bertrand Dore. Dore also served for ten years on the Board of Trustees of the Penn Center on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. He reflects upon his life and family, as well as his hopes and concerns for the African American community. Dore concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.