

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lorenzo Creighton

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Creighton, Lorenzo, 1953-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lorenzo Creighton,
Dates:	April 4, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:52:12).
Abstract:	Gaming executive Lorenzo Creighton (1953 -) became the first African American property president on the Las Vegas strip. Creighton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 4, 2007, in Las Vegas, Nevada. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_122
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Gaming executive Lorenzo David Creighton was born on January 5, 1953 to David and Lucille Fox Creighton in Waterloo, Iowa. In 1975, Creighton received his B.A. degree in political science from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Creighton's first job was as an interviewer with the Pre-Trial Release Project for the Iowa Department of Corrections. He worked in community affairs and served as marketing director for the National Bank of Waterloo from 1978 to 1985.

At the age of thirty-one, Creighton decided to attend Drake Law School in Des Moines and obtained his J.D. degree in 1988. He then worked as a labor contract negotiator and consultant for the Iowa Department of Personnel. In 1989, Creighton became the deputy director of the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission. After six months, Iowa legislature passed the Riverboat Gambling Bill and gave the regulatory authority to the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission. Creighton was responsible for writing the regulations for the riverboat gaming industry. The first casino opened in 1991, and Creighton became interested in pursuing a career in the gaming industry.

Creighton has held several positions within the gaming industry including Executive Director of the Mississippi Gaming Commission; an executive position with the Lady Luck in Natchez, Mississippi; general manager of the President Casinos in St. Louis, Missouri and vice president of operations for Bally's Casino in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 2002, Creighton became President of the Flamingo Hilton in Las Vegas. The MGM Mirage named Creighton President and COO of the New York New York Hotel and Casino in 2005, making Creighton the first African American property President on the Las Vegas strip. Creighton and his wife, Lisa, have five children.

Lorenzo Creighton was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 4, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lorenzo Creighton was conducted by Denise Gines on April 4, 2007, in Las Vegas, Nevada, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Gaming executive Lorenzo Creighton (1953 -) became the first African American property president on the Las Vegas strip.

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:

Creighton, Lorenzo, 1953-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Creighton, Lorenzo, 1953- --Interviews

African American executives--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Gaming 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 Lorenzo Creighton, April 4, 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 Lorenzo Creighton, Section A2007_122_001_001, TRT: 0:28:31 ?

Lorenzo Creighton was born on January 5, 1953 in Waterloo, Iowa to Lucille Fox Creighton and David Creighton. His maternal family descended from Creek Native Americans and African American slaves in Clarke County, Alabama, where his maternal great-grandmother grew up on a plantation. After slavery ended, his maternal great-grandfather acquired land, and bequeathed it to Creighton's maternal grandmother, Mary Fox. While her husband, Charlie Fox, worked on the railroad, she established a tree farm in Clarke County, where Creighton's mother was born in 1925. Creighton's father was also born in

Clarke County, to tree farmers Dora Williams Creighton and Lorenzo Peavy. Creighton's parents met in Mobile, Alabama, and left the South in search of better employment during the 1940s. They moved to Waterloo, where his mother became a cook at a correctional facility, and his father worked at the Deere and Company foundry. They raised Creighton in a working class, African American neighborhood on the east side of Waterloo.

African American families--Iowa--Waterloo.

Segregation--Iowa--Waterloo.

Discrimination--United States--Iowa.

Waterloo (Iowa)--Race relations.

African American neighborhoods--Iowa--Waterloo.

Video Oral History Interview with Lorenzo Creighton, Section A2007_122_001_002, TRT: 0:29:02
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Lorenzo Creighton grew up in the all-black community on the east side of Waterloo, Iowa. While most of the residents worked at the meatpacking plant or the foundry, the community also included a large black business district, where Creighton was influenced by entrepreneurs like Clifford Smith, who owned the Cliff's Supper Club restaurant and boardinghouse. During the 1960s, a large part of the business district was destroyed by riots, and the community was also disrupted by highway construction, which displaced Creighton and his family from their home in 1963. Creighton began his education at Waterloo's Longfellow Elementary School. He transferred to Our Lady of Victory Academy, and then enrolled at Charles S. McKinstry Junior High School. He went on to attend East High School, where he joined the wrestling and football teams. Upon graduating in 1971, Creighton matriculated at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where he successfully advocated for the creation of a black studies program.

African American families--Iowa--Waterloo.

Segregation in education--Iowa.

Civil rights demonstrations--Iowa--20th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Lorenzo Creighton, Section A2007_122_001_003, TRT: 0:28:30
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Lorenzo Creighton attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where the Black Student Union hosted activists Dick Gregory, Hosea Williams and Julian Bond. Creighton graduated with a teaching degree in 1975, and then obtained a part time position at East High School in Waterloo, Iowa, where he worked under his former teacher, Principal Walter L. Cunningham. In 1976, Creighton found part time work at the Boys Clubs of America and the local corrections department. He then decided to run for a seat in the Iowa House of Representatives in 1978; and won the primary, but lost the general election. Instead, Creighton became a management trainee at the National Bank of Waterloo, where he gained experience in departments like commercial lending and community affairs. From 1982, he served as a magistrate of Waterloo's small claims and misdemeanor courts; and, in 1984, he served on the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. Creighton then enrolled at Drake University Law School in Des Moines, Iowa, where he graduated in 1988.

Unemployment--United States--Iowa.

Iowa--Race relations.

African American judges--Iowa.

Deere & Company--Iowa.

Video Oral History Interview with Lorenzo Creighton, Section A2007_122_001_004, TRT: 0:28:09
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Lorenzo Creighton worked as a management specialist at the Iowa Department of Personnel while attending Drake University Law School in Des Moines, Iowa; and, after graduating, became a contract negotiator at the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. From 1989, Creighton served as a deputy director of the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission; and, after the Iowa legislature authorized riverboat casinos, was appointed to manage the regulations. In 1992, Creighton was recruited by politician Harvey Johnson, Jr. to join the Mississippi Gaming Commission as its executive director. In this role, he supervised licensing regulations during a period that saw the opening of five casinos. He also successfully advocated for a casino in Tunica County, Mississippi, which was the poorest county in the United States at the time. Creighton briefly headed a casino in St. Louis, Missouri, and then became the president of the Lady Luck Natchez casino in Natchez, Mississippi.

Employment--United States--Iowa

Gaming (Gambling)--Mississippi

Gaming (Gambling)--Iowa

Casinos--Law and legislation--Mississippi

Labor laws & legislation--United States

Video Oral History Interview with Lorenzo Creighton, Section A2007_122_001_005, TRT: 0:28:49
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Lorenzo Creighton served as the president of the Lady Luck Natchez riverboat casino in Natchez, Mississippi, which was owned by the Lady Luck Gaming Corporation in Las Vegas, Nevada. He was then recruited by gaming executive Wally Barr of the Bally Entertainment Corporation to head Bally's Casino Lakeshore Resort in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 2001, Creighton transferred to Las Vegas, where he led the Bally Entertainment Corporation's community affairs and government affairs programs. In this role, he coordinated charitable contributions, tracked legislation and held political fundraisers to earn legislators' support. He was later promoted to the presidency of the Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel and Casino. In 2005, Creighton joined the MGM Mirage as the president and CEO of the New York-New York Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. He also remember rebuilding a former coworker's home in Violet, Louisiana, after it was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Gaming (Gambling)--Mississippi.

African Americans--Employment--United States.

Hurricane Katrina, 2005.

Gaming (Gambling)--Nevada--Las Vegas.

Video Oral History Interview with Lorenzo Creighton, Section A2007_122_001_006, TRT: 0:29:11
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Lorenzo Creighton collaborated with the chairman of the board and CEO of MGM Mirage, J. Terrence Lanni, to hire a diverse staff at the company's casinos in Las Vegas, Nevada. At this point in the interview, he reflects upon the challenge of recruiting African American workers as gaming employees. To help students of color to complete their education, the MGM Mirage established scholarships at Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; and created incentives to encourage student employees to earn their degrees. Creighton was a member of such organizations as the MGM Mirage Voice Foundation; Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity; and recording artist Usher's charitable foundation, Usher's New Look. Creighton describes his family, his

hopes and concerns for the African American community and his advice to future generations. He also reflects upon his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered; and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.

African Americans--Social conditions--21st century.

Minority business enterprises.

African American college students--Scholarships, fellowships, etc.