

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jose J. Mapily

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Mapily, Jose J., 1941-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jose J. Mapily,
Dates:	April 26, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	8 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:38:44).
Abstract:	Architect and architecture professor Jose J. Mapily (1941 - 2019) was an associate professor of architecture at Morgan State University and Howard University. He also served as principal architect in charge of designs for some Washington, D.C. building projects, including the Charles Hamilton Houston Neighborhood Center and the Mary McLeod Bethune House. Mapily was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 26, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_165
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Retired architecture professor and artist Jose Julian Mapily was born on August 13, 1941 in Washington, D.C. to Gladys Mines Mapily, a clerk, and William Mapily, a master sheet metal mechanic. Mapily attended and graduated from Howard University in 1965, earning his B.A. degree in architecture. In 1972, Mapily earned his M.A. degree in city and regional planning, also from Howard University.

Mapily started his career at Morgan State University as an associate professor of architecture and city planning on the graduate level program. He then returned to his alma mater, Howard University, in 1980 again serving as associate professor of architecture and city planning. While serving as an educator, Mapily also worked at a local architectural firm, Bryant and Bryant Architects and Planners. He served as the principal architect in charge of designs for some Washington, D.C. building projects including the Charles Hamilton Houston Neighborhood Center, the Mary McLeod Bethune House and the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church. Mapily also completed designs for a \$20 million project for the University of the District of Columbia, Van Ness campus.

Mapily has also begun a career as an artist. His artwork can be described as gridlike paintings made out of white dots on a dark ground that resemble schematic drawings of buildings or circuit diagrams for electrical components. In 2002, Mapily's artwork appeared at the Gala Auction Exhibition at the WPA/Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. In 2004, he participated in the exhibition, *Medusa Muse Artists* at North Carolina Wesleyan College Gallery in Rocky Mount, North Carolina.

Mapily was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 26, 2007.

Mapily passed away on July 12, 2019.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jose J. Mapily was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 26, 2007, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 8 Betacame SP videocassettes. Architect and architecture professor Jose J. Mapily (1941 - 2019) was an associate professor of architecture at Morgan State University and Howard University. He also served as principal architect in charge of designs for some Washington, D.C. building projects, including the Charles Hamilton Houston Neighborhood Center and the Mary McLeod Bethune House.

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:

Mapily, Jose J., 1941-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Mapily, Jose J., 1941- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Architect

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 Jose J. Mapily, April 26, 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 Jose J. Mapily, Section A2007_165_001_001, TRT: 0:29:35 ?

Jose J. Mapily was born on August 13, 1941 to Gladys Mines Mapily and William Mapily. His maternal family was Native American and Jamaican, and his maternal great-grandfather had Dutch ancestry. Mapily's maternal grandfather worked as a Pullman porter, and moved from Goshen, New York to Washington, D.C., where he married Mapily's maternal grandmother, a graduate of the Miner Normal School. After the couple separated, he returned to Upstate New York. Mapily's paternal grandmother died when his father was only five

years old, so his father was raised by Mapily's paternal grandfather, who emigrated from the Philippines during the Spanish American War, and spoke little English. Mapily's parents met in high school in Washington, D.C. There, his mother became a clerk for the federal government and the Washington D.C. public schools; while his father was a sheet metal mechanic at the U.S. Navy Yard, and worked on President John Fitzgerald Kennedy's presidential limousine.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose J. Mapily, Section A2007_165_001_002, TRT: 0:27:30 ?

Jose J. Mapily and his parents moved to a development for black World War II veterans in Washington, D.C., after his father, William Mapily returned from serving in the U.S. Navy. Many of his neighbors worked in the federal government, as did his mother, Gladys Mines Mapily, from whom Mapily inherited his creativity. Mapily learned precision and craftsmanship from his father, a sheet metal mechanic, while his neighbors taught him skills like sewing, cooking and plumbing. As a child, Mapily often watched television at a neighbor's house, until his parents purchased their own set. Mapily, who was interested in machines, once repaired the television set while his parents were out of the house. He also enjoyed listening to rhythm and blues music, and modified his family's speakers to improve the sound quality. In addition to his skills in mechanics, Mapily was interested in art from an early age. The first building he drew was the Jefferson Memorial.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose J. Mapily, Section A2007_165_001_003, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Jose J. Mapily began his education at Monroe Elementary School in Washington, D.C., and transferred to Richardson Elementary School upon moving to the Lincoln Heights housing development. He finished the sixth grade in the newly constructed John Carroll Nalle Elementary School, and graduated to Kelly Miller Junior High School. There, Mapily struggled with dyslexia, and was placed in the slow class, although he eventually transferred to the honors class. Mapily's science teacher recognized his difficulty with reading, and implemented spoken exams. He was also mentored by his scoutmaster, Mr. Goodlow. At Joel Elias Spingarn Senior High School, Mapily ran for the cross country team, and his peers included Elgin Baylor and David Bing, who became professional basketball players. After the Sputnik 1 launch, Mapily was inspired to become an aeronautical engineer; and, in preparation, enrolled in a drafting class taught by his parents' friend. During the course, he decided to become an architect instead.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose J. Mapily, Section A2007_165_001_004, TRT: 0:28:55 ?

Jose J. Mapily was encouraged by his science teacher at Joel Elias Spingarn Senior High School, but was told by a guidance counselor to abandon his aspiration to become an architect and attend a trade school instead. He ignored that advice; and, from 1959, attended Howard University in Washington, D.C. during the presidency of James M. Nabrit, Jr. At that time, SNCC activist Stokely Carmichael was also student, and Marion Barry and H. Rap Brown often visited the campus. Due to his dyslexia, Mapily faced challenges throughout his college years, and he shares the methods he used to cope later during his professional career. He also talks about the early African American architects, including William H. Moses, Jr., who won an architectural competition in the 1939 New York World's Fair with his design for the Virginia state pavilion; and the difficulties encountered by black architects at the time of the interview, such as racially exclusive business networks.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose J. Mapily, Section A2007_165_001_005, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Jose J. Mapily attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., where his

peers included Otis Young, one of the first African American commercial pilots. Mapily earned a bachelor's degree in 1965, and was hired by architect Anthony N. Johns, Jr. However, after losing business to a white firm, Mapily decided to return to Howard University to study city and regional planning to better compete in the market. Upon graduating, Mapily founded a firm with Lawrence Turner, John Carter and Albert Edgecombe. The group mostly designed educational facilities and churches. In 1972, Mapily learned historic preservation techniques while working with Nicholas Sadley on the Logan Circle historic district of Washington, D.C. The firm later moved into mass transit design, and bought its first computer. Mapily explains how computers changed the architecture industry, and the challenges of working with local governments. He also describes the Charles Houston Community Center in Alexandria, Virginia, one of his favorite projects.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose J. Mapily, Section A2007_165_001_006, TRT: 0:30:25 ?

Jose J. Mapily learned about prominent architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe at Howard University in Washington, D.C., which helped him to develop his own design style. While designing the Charles Houston Community Center in 1976, Mapily clashed with the project manager over budget concerns. However, the finished building was under budget, and a boon to the community of Alexandria, Virginia. Mapily also designed facilities for the University of the District of Columbia. He began teaching at Howard University as a part time professor in 1979; and, over his twenty-seven year career, taught a broad range of architectural subjects. He talks about the students who inspired him, including an international student who remained at school during her father's death, attended his funeral in Nigeria and returned the next day to present her design thesis. Mapily also describes his concerns for his students and the quality of education in the United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose J. Mapily, Section A2007_165_001_007, TRT: 0:29:51 ?

Jose J. Mapily was invited to exhibit a painting in the Corcoran Gallery in 2001, and began a collaborative relationship with artist Leslie King-Hammond after offering advice on her artwork. King-Hammond and Mapily submitted 'The Magic Birdhouse,' an homage to basketball players Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, to a gallery show in Miami, Florida entitled 'It's for the Birds.' The sculpture was purchased by painter Jonathan Green, and Mapily and King-Hammond began creating other birdhouse artwork, including a piece commemorating Seneca Village in New York City. They were soon invited to exhibit work at the Studio Museum in Harlem by curator Lowery Stokes Sims. They also partnered on a benefit dinner for the Creative Alliance; and a jewelry business, for which King-Hammond designed the earrings, and Mapily designed the necklaces. Mapily reflects upon his life, legacy and architectural style; and describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, as well as his son and grandchildren.

Video Oral History Interview with Jose J. Mapily, Section A2007_165_001_008, TRT: 0:14:08 ?

Jose J. Mapily shares his concerns for the American architecture industry. He describes how he would like to be remembered, and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.