

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Paul Underwood, 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>	Underwood, Paul, 1960-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 14, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:46:31).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Cardiologist Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. (1960 - ) is a former president of the Association of Black Cardiologists. Underwood spearheaded the African American Heart Failure Trial that led to BiDil, the first ever heart medication specifically geared towards African Americans. Underwood was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 14, 2007, in Phoenix, Arizona. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_207
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Cardiologist Dr. Paul L. Underwood, Jr., was born on March 23, 1960 in Knoxville, Tennessee. After Underwood graduated from Austin-East High School in 1976, he received his B.S. degree in biology at Morehouse College with departmental honors and his M.D. degree from the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine in Rochester, Minnesota. Underwood completed his post graduate training at the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and the Iowa Heart Center.

In 1987, Underwood began working at St. Croix Hospital in the U.S. Virgin Islands. During his three year stay there, Underwood eventually became the Director of the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit for the hospital. He also became the Physician Advisor for the Peer Review Organization at the Virgin Islands Medical Institute.

In 1997, Underwood acted as a consultant among a sixteen member multidisciplinary medical team that traveled to Dakar, Senegal to provide cardiovascular medical care for the community. The venture, Project MEDHELP, led by Albert F. Olivier, consisted of cardiothoracic and general surgeons, anesthesiologists, cardiologists, internists, public health experts, dermatologists and gynecologists.

In 2004, Underwood was appointed as the tenth president of the Association of Black Cardiologists, where he served until 2006. Under Underwood's leadership, the organization developed various community based programs including Changing Health Outcomes by Improving Cardiovascular Education and Screenings (CHOICES), and the Center for Continuing Education and Professional Development (CCEPD), which is ranked in the top five percent of accredited providers. Underwood also developed Project Hope, a project that provided Hurricane Katrina evacuees with medical care and refurbished medical records.

Also in 2004, Underwood led the Association of Black Cardiologists to manage and unveil the results of the

African American Heart Failure Trial (A-HeFT), the first study conducted in a heart failure population in which all of the participants identified themselves as black. The results of the study led to the production of the drug, BiDil, the first ever heart medication specifically geared towards African Americans—the racial demographic with the highest percentage of heart disease.

In 2006, Underwood joined the North Phoenix Heart Center, before joining his wife at Sonoran Health Specialists in Scottsdale, Arizona. Underwood serves on several boards and organizations including the Black Board of Directors Project and the Use of Force Disciplinary Review Board of the Phoenix Police Department.

Underwood lives with his wife, Dr. Hollis Underwood, a physician in private practice, and their three sons, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Underwood was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 14, 2007.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. was conducted by Jacques Lesure on July 14, 2007, in Phoenix, Arizona, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Cardiologist Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. (1960 - ) is a former president of the Association of Black Cardiologists. Underwood spearheaded the African American Heart Failure Trial that led to BiDil, the first ever heart medication specifically geared towards African Americans.

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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:

Underwood, Paul, 1960-

Lesure, Jacques (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Underwood, Paul, 1960- --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:

Cardiologist

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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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 Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr., July 14, 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).

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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.

## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr., Section A2007\_207\_001\_001, TRT: 0:31:40 ?

Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. was born on March 23, 1960 in Knoxville, Tennessee to Jacqueline Martin Underwood and Paul Underwood, Sr. His maternal ancestors lived in Sevierville, Tennessee where many blacks worked as brick masons. Underwood's maternal grandfather, Ralph Martin owned a grocery store in Marion, Alabama before becoming a dean at Knoxville College in Tennessee. His maternal grandmother, Kathryn (ph.) Martin had multiple sclerosis. His mother was born in Sevierville, Tennessee and grew up on the campus of Knoxville College; she later became a math professor. Underwood's paternal grandparents were Walter and Louise Underwood. His father was raised in Mechanicsville, an inner city area of Knoxville. He worked as deputy marshal and fire fighter. Underwood's parents met as students at Knoxville College. Underwood talks about his childhood in Knoxville and his limited experience of racial discrimination in his youth. He attended First Lutheran School and Ft. Sanders School in Knoxville.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr., Section A2007\_207\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. attended Ft. Sanders School in Knoxville, Tennessee for three years before enrolling at Webb School of Knoxville, a private school where he played football and ice hockey, and had his first black teacher. After attending majority schools for most of his life, Underwood decided to attend Austin-East High School in 1974, an all-black high school in the tenth grade. Underwood describes his socialization in the black and also white communities of Knoxville, and race relations in the city. He talks about white families that hosted him while he played on a traveling ice hockey team. Underwood recounts privileges that were afforded him while a student at the Webb School of Knoxville that were revoked after he became an Austin-East student. Initially interested in business, Underwood's father encouraged him to pursue the math and sciences. Underwood entered Morehouse College in 1976 as a dual major in engineering and pre-med.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr., Section A2007\_207\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:31 ?

Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia from 1976 to 1980, and majored in engineering and pre-med. He describes HistoryMaker Dr. David Satcher, an influential professor at Morehouse who became the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and later, Surgeon General. While at Morehouse, Underwood worked as a nurse's aide at Grady Memorial Hospital where he met renowned cardiologist, Dr. J. Willis Hurst. After graduating from Morehouse, Underwood decided to enroll at the Mayo Medical School in Rochester, Minnesota. At Mayo, Underwood was one of three African Americans in his class. He describes the close relationship between black students on campus and their formation of a local chapter of the Student National Medical Association. He also talks about race relations in Rochester and his experience of racial discrimination from the cardiology faculty at Mayo Medical School.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr., Section A2007\_207\_001\_004, TRT:

0:29:00 ?

Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. talks about equal opportunity initiatives at Mayo Medical School in Rochester, Minnesota, and African American professors at the school like Dr. Franklyn Prendergast. At Mayo, Underwood met his wife, HistoryMaker Dr. Hollis Underwood. After graduating in 1984, Underwood conducted a year-long internship at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan where he interacted with many African American patients. He talks about Detroit's crack addiction and gang violence. He then returned to Minnesota where he conducted his internal medicine residency at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine in 1985. In 1987, he became the director of the emergency room and the intensive care unit at St. Croix Hospital in the Virgin Islands. While there, Underwood also helped develop a hurricane preparedness program on St. Croix for FEMA, which was used after Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Underwood left St. Croix in 1990 for a cardiology fellowship at Cleveland Clinic.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr., Section A2007\_207\_001\_005, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. remembers his father's death. From 1990 to 1993, Underwood was a cardiology fellow at Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio. He then spent six months at Iowa Heart Center in Des Moines, Iowa learning interventional cardiology. Upon finishing his medical training, Underwood worked as a locum tenens physician before he was hired by Advanced Cardiac Specialists in Gilbert, Arizona in 1994. After moving to Phoenix, Arizona, Underwood joined HistoryMaker Marvin Perry's Black Board of Directors Project, and became involved in community health advocacy and the American Heart Association. He traveled to Senegal in 1997 to establish a cardiovascular surgery center in Dakar with Project MEDHELP. In 1999, he joined the Association of Black Cardiologists, later serving as the organization's president, and guiding the group's response to Hurricane Katrina. Underwood also talks about BiDil, a prescription drug for African Americans with heart disease, and winning the 2006 Lincoln Ragsdale Award.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr., Section A2007\_207\_001\_006, TRT: 0:20:10 ?

Dr. Paul Underwood, Jr. describes the experience of working with his wife, HistoryMaker Dr. Hollis Underwood at her practice, Sonoran Health Specialists. He reflects upon his professional aspirations as well as his hopes for the African American community. Underwood then shares his advice for African American students interested in pursuing medicine before concluding his interview by describing his legacy and how he would like to be remembered. He also narrates his photographs.