

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Roshell "Mike" Anderson

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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>	Anderson, Roshell
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Roshell "Mike" Anderson,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 27, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:03:44).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Television news reporter, musician and singer, and radio dj Roshell "Mike" Anderson (1952 - 2020) was an anchor and reporter for WISN-TV Channel 12 News in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He had an extensive career as a radio personality, singer and songwriter before starting his television career. Anderson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 27, 2007, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_331
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, television news reporter Roshell “Mike” Anderson was born on September 16, 1952 in Bogalusa, Louisiana, and raised in New Orleans. His mother, Mellenese Magee Anderson moved to New Orleans where she was a cook at The Court of Two Sisters Restaurant. His father, Robert Anderson, was a sergeant in the Korean War. Anderson was raised in the Algiers Church of God in Christ, where he first gained experience in public speaking and singing for an audience. In 1968, he developed a popular impression of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Graduating from Clarke High School in New Orleans in 1970, Anderson, known as “Cool Breeze,” patterned himself after Dr. Daddyo, a local radio personality, and CBS-TV news anchor, Walter Cronkite. Anderson attended Louisiana State University and the Career Academy School of Broadcast Journalism in Atlanta, Georgia, graduating in 1971.

Anderson earned his first class license in Atlanta in 1970 and worked at a number of southern radio stations, including WXNS, WKLS, WAOK, as announcer and disc jockey. He has been known as Roshell Magee and General Frank Magee. Anderson developed a singing and song writing career before getting involved with television. His 1972 record, “Snake out of Green Grass” made the Billboard charts followed by “Grapevine Will Lie Sometimes” in 1974. Anderson then took to the concert circuit. He joined WLWI-FM in Montgomery, Alabama in 1978 and switched to rival WXVI-FM in 1979. That same year, Anderson got his start in television at WAPI-TV in Birmingham, Alabama. As a news reporter, “Mike” Anderson covered the tense case of a black woman shot nine times by Birmingham police.

Before joining WISN-TV 12 News in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Anderson worked as a news anchor and reporter at KIRO-TV in Seattle, Washington. During his tenure at WISN, Anderson has been the recipient of many awards, including his work on the award-winning documentaries *Children in the Line of Fire* and *Solutions to Violence*. He has interviewed four American presidents: Richard M. Nixon, George Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. He

is a current member of the Wisconsin Black Media Association.

Anderson lives in Brown Deer, Wisconsin and has three children: Nicole, Mellenese and Michael. When not reporting the news, he is still a professional recording artist; cutting the album, *Sweet and Sour Soul* in 1988 and *Rolling Over* in 2006.

Anderson passed away on April 21, 2020.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Roshell "Mike" Anderson was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 27, 2007, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Television news reporter, musician and singer, and radio dj Roshell "Mike" Anderson (1952 - 2020) was an anchor and reporter for WISN-TV Channel 12 News in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He had an extensive career as a radio personality, singer and songwriter before starting his television career.

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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:

Anderson, Roshell

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Anderson, Roshell--Interviews

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African American radio broadcasters--Interviews

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African American television journalists--Wisconsin--Interviews

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African American television personalities--Wisconsin--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:

Television News Reporter

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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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 Roshell "Mike" Anderson, November 27, 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Roshell "Mike" Anderson, Section A2007\_331\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Roshell "Mike" Anderson was born on September 16, 1952 in Bogalusa, Louisiana to Mellenese Magee Anderson and Robert Anderson, Jr. His maternal grandfather and great uncle owned farms in Franklinton, Louisiana; but, after their deaths, their families were dispossessed by white businessmen. Anderson's mother was born in Franklinton in 1926, and was educated through the seventh grade before moving to find work in New Orleans, Louisiana. There, she met Anderson's father, a native of Hattiesburg, Mississippi who served as a U.S. Army sergeant in the Korean War. Anderson was raised in Franklinton by his maternal grandmother and aunt, while his mother worked as a cook for the Court of the Two Sisters in New Orleans' French Quarter, and as a custodian at Eleanor McMain Junior High School. After joining his mother in New Orleans, Anderson attended the Algiers Church of God in Christ. He also remembers overhearing his maternal grandfather's recollections of slavery.

African American radio broadcasters--Interviews.

African American television journalists--Wisconsin--Interviews.

African American television personalities--Wisconsin--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Roshell "Mike" Anderson, Section A2007\_331\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:16 ?

Roshell "Mike" Anderson spent his early childhood in Franklinton, Louisiana, where he grew up on his maternal grandparents' farm. He enjoyed playing outside, and watching Westerns on television. Anderson began his education at Franklinton's Washington Parish Elementary School, and then moved to his mother's home on Columbus Street in the 7th Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana. There, he attended McDonogh No. 32 through the seventh grade, and completed the eighth grade at Andrew J. Bell Junior High School. During this period, Anderson was diagnosed with sickle cell anemia, but recovered. This experience affirmed his religious commitment, including his belief in the power of prayer. Anderson went on to attend Joseph S. Clark High School in New Orleans, where he was influenced by his geometry teacher, and earned the nickname Cool Breeze for his relaxed demeanor. At this point in the interview, Anderson talks about the use of slang and derogatory language, and his approach to morality.

Video Oral History Interview with Roshell "Mike" Anderson, Section A2007\_331\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:10 ?

Mike "Roshell" Anderson attended the Algiers Church of God in Christ in New Orleans, Louisiana. There, he sang original and sanctified music with the quartet, and honed his public speaking skills by reciting the speeches of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although Anderson's mother, Mellenese Magee Anderson, encouraged him to become a teacher, he aspired to a career in television journalism. He admired news anchor Walter Cronkite, and Dr. Daddy-O of New Orleans' WYLD Radio. Upon graduating in 1970 from Joseph S. Clark High School, Anderson studied briefly at Louisiana State University - New Orleans, and then enrolled in the Career Academy, which offered

broadcasting courses at its campus in Atlanta, Georgia. He interned at Atlanta's WAOK Radio, and obtained a first class license in radio transmission. In 1972, Anderson worked as an overnight news announcer for Atlanta's WKLS Radio. Then, Nashboro Records produced his first song, and he signed a recording contract with Sunburst Records, Ltd.

Video Oral History Interview with Roshell "Mike" Anderson, Section A2007\_331\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:15 ?

Roshell "Mike" Anderson worked during the early 1970s as a radio announcer for WGOV Radio in Valdosta, Georgia, and then for WERD Radio in Jacksonville, Florida. When his song, 'Know What You're Doing When You Leave,' was ranked on the Billboard charts, Anderson left the broadcast industry to pursue a career on the Chitlin' Circuit. His success as a vocalist persisted through the late 1970s, when he returned to the radio business as a disc jockey for WLWI Radio in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1979, Anderson transitioned to a news role at WAPI-TV in Birmingham, Alabama; and, after a demotion to WAPI Radio, joined KIRO-TV in Seattle, Washington, where he covered the eruption of Mount St. Helens, and interviewed Stevie Wonder. He went on to work for WISN-TV in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he reported on serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, and the death of Ernest Lacy while in police custody. Anderson reflects upon his concerns for the black community, as well as his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Roshell "Mike" Anderson, Section A2007\_331\_001\_005, TRT: 0:05:23 ?

Roshell "Mike" Anderson narrates his photographs.