

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Martin Nesbitt

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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>	Nesbitt, Martin, 1962-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Martin Nesbitt,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 26, 2010
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2010
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:24:59).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Transportation chief executive Martin Nesbitt (1962 - ) was the founder, president and CEO of the airport parking corporation, The Parking Spot. He was also a close friend and advisor of President Barack Obama. Nesbitt was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 26, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2010_101
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Transportation Chief Executive, Presidential Advisor, and City Government Official Martin Nesbitt was born in Columbus, Ohio on November 29, 1962, to Margaret and Martin Nesbitt. He graduated from Columbus Academy High School and went on to receive his B.S. degree from Albion College in 1985. He began working for the General Motors Acceptance Corporation as an analyst and while there qualified for a fellowship from GM to attend the University of Chicago to attain his M.B.A. degree. After he graduated from the University of Chicago, he went to work for LaSalle Partners as an associate. In 1991, he was promoted to vice president of the company. In addition to meeting his future wife during his time at the University of Chicago, Nesbitt became good friends with future President of the United States Barack Obama.

In 1996, while looking for investors in an airport parking company he was hoping to start, he became acquainted with Penny Pritzker of the Pritzker Realty group. She was impressed with Nesbitt, and invited him to become Vice President of her organization. Nesbitt served in that capacity for two years before receiving the funding to found his own airport parking and transportation corporation called The Parking Spot. Nesbitt began serving as president and CEO of the company.

In 2003, Nesbitt was appointed to the Chicago Housing Authority, which had recently come back under the city of Chicago's control and had begun to implement the Plan for Transformation to completely overhaul the public housing system in Chicago. Three years later, Nesbitt began serving as vice chairman of the CHA and was quickly appointed chairman by Mayor Richard Daley. In 2007, Barack Obama announced his candidacy for president of the United States and Nesbitt became his campaign treasurer. Obama won the election and Nesbitt returned to work for The Parking Spot, although he and Obama have remained in close contact during his presidency.

Nesbitt has been active in the Big Brothers/Sisters of American program and has served as the Chairman of the DuSable District of the Boy Scouts of America. He is also a trustee of the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art,

a member of the University of Chicago Laboratory School Board, and was a member of the United Negro College Fund Advisory Council.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Martin Nesbitt was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on August 26, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Transportation chief executive Martin Nesbitt (1962 - ) was the founder, president and CEO of the airport parking corporation, The Parking Spot. He was also a close friend and advisor of President Barack Obama.

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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:

Nesbitt, Martin, 1962-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Nesbitt, Martin, 1962- --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:

Transportation Chief Executive

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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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 Martin Nesbitt, August 26, 2010. 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 Martin Nesbitt, Section A2010\_101\_001\_001, TRT: 0:31:30 ?

Martin Nesbitt was born on November 29, 1962 in Columbus, Ohio to Margaret Latham Nesbitt and Marvin Nesbitt. After emancipation, his paternal great-grandfather received land from his former slave owner in Promise Land, Tennessee. There, the family established a farm, where Nesbitt's father was born

and raised. Nesbitt's mother was one of thirteen children born in Logan, West Virginia to Ida Latham and Raymond Latham, who was a reverend and coal miner. Both of Nesbitt's parents moved to Columbus, Ohio as teenagers. His mother was an exceptional student, and received a scholarship to attend Howard University in Washington, D.C., but chose to marry Nesbitt's father instead. His father went on to work at the Ohio Malleable Iron Company, and later opened the Southeast Fish Market. Nesbitt enjoyed spending time with his immediate family, especially his paternal grandparents, Myrtle Thompson Nesbitt and Babe Nesbitt, who lived in near his home in Columbus.

Video Oral History Interview with Martin Nesbitt, Section A2010\_101\_001\_002, TRT: 0:35:30 ?

Martin Nesbitt grew up in a close knit community in Columbus, Ohio. Each Sunday, his family attended the Hosack Street Baptist Church, where his mother played the piano. Nesbitt began his education at Kent Elementary School, and was encouraged to excel academically. When the schools were desegregated, Nesbitt's mother sent him to the predominately white Crestview Junior High School, which he attended with his sister, Marjorie Nesbitt, and neighborhood friends, Brian Eberhardt, Kevin Eberhardt and Nannette Eberhardt. There, he learned to interact with his white peers, and became a leader of his class. During this time, Nesbitt's family shielded him from negative influences like drugs and gang activity. With the encouragement of his junior high school guidance counselor, he successfully applied for A Better Chance scholarship, which enabled him to attend the Columbus Academy, a private school in Gahanna, Ohio. There, he joined the football team, and confronted a student who accosted him with racist remarks.

Video Oral History Interview with Martin Nesbitt, Section A2010\_101\_001\_003, TRT: 0:34:07 ?

Martin Nesbitt attended the Columbus Academy in Gahanna, Ohio, where he was one of the six African American students in his class. He was mentored by headmasters Bo Dixon and Tim Golding; and, under the tutelage of basketball coach Jack MacMullan, competed in the state championship game. Upon graduating in 1981, Nesbitt matriculated at Albion College in Albion, Michigan, where he played on the basketball team with Dave Valkanoff. Nesbitt had been inspired by his neighbor, Columbus City Councilman Jerry Hammond, to pursue a career in city government; but was persuaded by his economics professors, Larry Steinhauer and Geraldine Rothchild, to obtain an M.B.A. degree. During his sophomore year, he was accepted into the management program at the Carl A. Gerstacker Institute for Professional Management at Albion College. Shortly after graduating, Nesbitt joined the General Motors Company; and, through their fellowship program, enrolled at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business in 1987.

Video Oral History Interview with Martin Nesbitt, Section A2010\_101\_001\_004, TRT: 0:33:25 ?

Martin Nesbitt left the General Motors Company to enroll at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business in Chicago, Illinois. There, he met his wife, Anita Blanchard; and befriended Craig Robinson, the brother of future First Lady Michelle Obama. Upon graduating, Nesbitt joined the LaSalle Partners, a realty investment company headed by William D. Sanders and Stuart L. Scott, where he worked with business leaders like Alan R. Braxton and Herman E. Bulls. During his seven year career with the LaSalle Partners, Nesbitt was promoted to equity vice president, and developed a business plan that focused on investing in parking structures, which impressed potential investor Penny Pritzker. She offered Nesbitt a position at the Pritzker Realty Group, which he accepted in 1996; and, in 1998, she invested \$50 million in Nesbitt's new venture, The Parking Spot. In his spare time, Nesbitt played basketball with

Craig Robinson, investor John Rogers, Jr. and future U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Video Oral History Interview with Martin Nesbitt, Section A2010\_101\_001\_005, TRT: 0:33:42 ?

Martin Nesbitt and Kevin J. Shrier founded The Parking Spot in 1998 through a partnership with investor Penny Pritzker. The company employed two thousand people, and provided parking services at major airports in New York, Pennsylvania, Missouri and Texas. During the 1990s, Nesbitt met future President Barack Obama while playing basketball with Michelle Obama's brother, Craig Robinson. Nesbitt's wife, Anita Blanchard, was also a friend of Michelle Obama, and a mentee of Valerie Jarrett's father, Dr. James Bowman, whom she met as a student at the University of Chicago School of Medicine. Nesbitt and his family were residents of Chicago's diverse Hyde Park community, where his children attended the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. At this point in the interview, Nesbitt talks about his support of President Obama's political career, including his congressional run against Bobby Rush, and his subsequent campaigns for the U.S. Senate and the presidency of the United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Martin Nesbitt, Section A2010\_101\_001\_006, TRT: 0:36:45 ?

Martin Nesbitt assisted his friend, U.S. Senator Barack Obama, on the presidential campaign trail in 2008. When controversies arose regarding statements made by Obama's pastor, Reverend Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Nesbitt encouraged Obama to address the comments directly. In response, Obama delivered a speech called A More Perfect Union, which inspired voters across the country. At this point in the interview, Nesbitt remembers the 2008 election night and President Obama's first inauguration. He reflects upon his friendship with President Obama, and his hopes for his tenure. Nesbitt also describes his family, which included his wife, Anita Blanchard, and their five children; as well as his hopes and concerns for the African American community and the American dream. Nesbitt concludes the interview by reflecting upon his legacy.