

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Gibor Basri

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Basri, Gibor, 1951-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Gibor Basri,
Dates:	March 9, 2011
Bulk Dates:	2011
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:29:27).
Abstract:	Physics professor and astrophysicist Gibor Basri (1951 -) was one of the first astrophysicists to discover brown dwarfs, stars without sufficient mass to have a stable brightness and that cool to planetary temperatures, in 1998. In 2007, he was named the first vice chancellor for equity and inclusion at the University of California, Berkeley. Basri was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 9, 2011, in Oakland, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2011_005
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Astrophysicist and physics professor Gibor Basri was born on May 3, 1951 to Saul and Phyllis Basri in New York, New York. His father was Jewish and a physics professor at Colorado State University while his mother, who was Jamaican, taught dance. Basri grew up in Fort Collins, Colorado with his younger brother, David, though the family also lived in Myanmar and Sri Lanka when his father was on Fulbright fellowships. Even as a child, Basri had a telescope to look at the sky and in eighth grade wrote a report on being an astronomer. Basri attended Fort Collins High School before attending Stanford University, where he followed in his father's footsteps, receiving his B.S. degree in physics in 1973. He then merged his interest in astronomy with his background in physics, obtaining his Ph.D. degree in astrophysics from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1979.

Basri first joined the University of California at Berkeley faculty under a Chancellor's Postdoctoral fellowship. He received tenure in 1988 and was named a full professor in 1994. His research has focused on star formation and stellar activity. Basri is considered a pioneer and expert in brown dwarfs, best known for his work with the 10-meter Keck Telescope which helped his team confirm the existence of brown dwarfs in 1995. From 2006 to 2007, Basri served as the acting chair for the Astronomy Department at the University of California Berkeley, and in 2007, he was named Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion at Berkeley by Chancellor Robert J. Birgeneau.

In 1997, Basri was awarded a Miller Research Professorship. He has written nearly 200 publications with over 7,000 citations attached to his work. In 2000, he was named a Sigma Xi Distinguished Lecturer and in 2001, Basri became co-investigator of the Kepler mission, selected by NASA as a discovery mission to find extra solar terrestrial planets. With an interest in science and technology education, Basri received the Chancellor's Award for Advancing Institutional Excellence in 2006 and serves on the board of the Chabot Space and Science Center as well as the "I Have a Dream, Oakland" Foundation.

Basri lives in California with his wife, Jessica, and their son, Jacob Basri.

Basri was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 9, 2011.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Gibor Basri was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 9, 2011, in Oakland, California, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Physics professor and astrophysicist Gibor Basri (1951 -) was one of the first astrophysicists to discover brown dwarfs, stars without sufficient mass to have a stable brightness and that cool to planetary temperatures, in 1998. In 2007, he was named the first vice chancellor for equity and inclusion at the University of California, Berkeley.

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:

Basri, Gibor, 1951-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Basri, Gibor, 1951- --Interviews

African American physicists--Interviews.

African American scientists--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

University of California, Berkeley

Occupations:

Astrophysicist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 Gibor Basri, March 9, 2011. 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 Gibor Basri, Section A2011_005_001_001, TRT: 0:29:03 ?

Gibor Basri begins by talking about his mother, Phyllis Claire Basri's lineage from East African slaves brought to Jamaica. He details his father, Saul Basri's lineage as an Iraqi Jew. Basri talks about his father's education at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and his mother's dancing education at Columbia University in New York, New York. He relates his childhood in Fort Collins, Colorado, as well as his worldly school experience in Myanmar and other travels as a child.

African American families.

Education, Elementary.

African American children.

Education--Asia.

African American children--Socialization--India.

Video Oral History Interview with Gibor Basri, Section A2011_005_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Gibor Basri discusses his parents' views on racial identity, as well as his own thoughts about his Jewish identity. He remembers his elementary school experience, including developing an interest in astronomy and science fiction books. Basri describes his father's work in physics, including a Fulbright Lectureship, which took the family abroad again. Basri recalls his high school experience in Tehran, Iran and Ceylon, later called Sri Lanka.

African Americans--Race identity.

Education, Secondary.

African American Jews--Identity.

International education.

Video Oral History Interview with Gibor Basri, Section A2011_005_001_003, TRT: 0:30:04 ?

Gibor Basri begins by explaining the inadequate school system in Ceylon, Sri Lanka, and meeting science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke while living there. He then talks about returning to the U.S. to finish high school and begin college. Basri explains how the civil rights movement and the age of space exploration influenced him in college. He recalls his experience playing in the Stanford University marching band.

Education--Sri Lanka.

Civil rights movements--Influence.

Astronautics--Influence.

Stanford University--Students.

College students--Social aspects--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Gibor Basri, Section A2011_005_001_004, TRT: 0:30:32 ?

Gibor Basri discusses his experience as an undergraduate at Stanford University, where he graduated in 1973 with his B.S. in physics. He talks about his decision to go to graduate school at the University of Colorado, Boulder where he also met his wife, Jessica Broitman. Basri talks about the work he did on the sun and magnetic activity of stars with advisor, Jeff Linsky, and details his use of the Kitt Peak telescope in Arizona to watch the sunset and "green flash." Basri also describes his thesis topic on the chromospheres of supergiant stars.

Post secondary Education--United States.

Physics--Research.

African Americans--Education (Higher).

Video Oral History Interview with Gibor Basri, Section A2011_005_001_005, TRT: 0:30:58 ?

Gibor Basri discusses, at length, the difference between astrology and astronomy, including details about how astronomers study stars. He tells a story about how he joined the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley by way of the Space Sciences Laboratory near the campus. Basri talks about the courses that he taught at Berkeley, which included a course on the nature of time. He transitions into a discussion about the philosophy and science of time, including time travel.

Astrology.

Astronomy.

University of California Berkley--Faculty.

Video Oral History Interview with Gibor Basri, Section A2011_005_001_006, TRT: 0:29:55 ?

Gibor Basri continues a discussion about time travel and the universe before describing his involvement in the discovery of brown dwarfs using the Keck telescopes on the Hawaiian island of Mauna Kea. Basri explains his research on star formation at the University of California, Berkeley, specifically young stars called T Tauri stars. He then talks about his involvement in Project Astro, which sought to increase community and minority participation in the sciences through astronomy. Basri discusses his external funding from NSF and NASA, and ends with his participation in the Kepler Mission, which relates to the discovery of extra solar planets.

United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration--African Americans.

National Science Foundation.

Astronomy--Research.

Video Oral History Interview with Gibor Basri, Section A2011_005_001_007, TRT: 0:28:55 ?

Gibor Basri discusses the definition of a planet, and briefly talks about the possibility of life on other planets. He explains his administrative positions at the University of California, Berkeley, as well as his involvement in professional organizations. Basri details his hopes and dreams for the black community concerning education and science, as he reflects on his life's accomplishments. He concludes by talking about his mother, father, wife, and son, and what they are doing today.

African American families.

Education, Higher--Administration.

Education, Higher--Social aspects--United States.

Planetary theory.