

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Frank Jones

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Jones, Frank, 1928- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Frank Jones, |
| Dates: | April 19, 2011 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2011 |
| Physical Description: | 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:02:10). |
| Abstract: | Academic administrator Frank Jones (1928 - 2022) was the Ford Professor Emeritus of Urban Affairs and the first African American tenured professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Jones was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 19, 2011, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2011_023 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Academic administrator Frank Jones was born on November 9, 1928 in Greensboro, North Carolina to Dr. David D. and Susie W. Jones. His father had become the president of Bennett College two years before his birth. His mother was a homemaker who was very involved in her community. Her parents were graduates of Berea College in Kentucky during the late 1880s. In 1946, Jones graduated high school from Andover Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. Jones graduated with his B.A. degree from Harvard University in 1950. After serving two years in the military and a few years working at a bank, he attended Harvard Business School, receiving his M.B.A. degree in 1957.

After completing business school, Jones was employed at the Harvard Business School as the assistant dean until 1962. He then worked as a marketing manager executive for Scott Paper Company where he had a very promising career. However, Jones was approached by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) President Howard W. Johnson and offered a job as assistant to the president at the school. He turned down that offer but accepted another job as assistant director of the Urban Systems Laboratory at MIT. Shortly thereafter, Jones was named Ford Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning and became the first African American tenured professor at the MIT in 1971. In addition to teaching civil engineering in the department of urban studies and planning, Jones was also actively involved on campus and within the larger community. He became director of the Whitney Young Program in 1971. This program was established through his department and allowed select local leaders to spend the equivalent of an academic year at MIT working with faculty on projects of special importance to them, their organizations or communities. Jones served on a committee to urge MIT to found the Office for Minority Education in 1974. The committee, comprised of faculty and students, wanted MIT to create that office whose mission was to recruit and retain minority students, implement programs to motivate academic performance, and to help minority students adjust to the MIT environment. In 1992, Jones retired and became professor emeritus at MIT.

Jones was active in the business community, joining numerous boards including The Corporation at Draper Laboratory, CIGNA and Connecticut General Insurance Corporation where Jones became the first African American board member. He generously supported charities including the Frank S. Jones Student Activity Fund at MIT which supported students working on community-based projects and activities.

Frank S. Jones was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 19, 2011.

Frank S. Jones passed away on August 8, 2022 at age 93.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Frank Jones was conducted by Denise Gines on April 19, 2011, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Academic administrator Frank Jones (1928 - 2022) was the Ford Professor Emeritus of Urban Affairs and the first African American tenured professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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:

Jones, Frank, 1928-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Jones, Frank, 1928- --Interviews

African American academic administrators--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Occupations:

Academic Administrator

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Frank Jones, April 19, 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 Frank Jones, Section A2011_023_001_001, TRT: 1:32:16 ?

Frank Jones was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, on November 9, 1928. His father, David Dallas Jones, was also born in Greensboro on November 19, 1889. David's brother sent him to Wesleyan University in Connecticut, where he graduated in 1911. Jones' father was the president of Bennett College and died of cancer in January of 1956. Jones' paternal grandparents were Mary Jane Holly and Sydney Dallas Jones. His mother, Suzie Pearl Williams, was born in Danville, Kentucky in 1892. Jones' maternal grandmother, Fannie Bell Miller, graduated from Berea College in Kentucky in 1888. Jones attended Sumner High School in St. Louis, Missouri. Jones' parents initially did not want him to go to Andover Academy like his siblings, so they sent him to Sumner High School for two years, after which he attended Andover Academy, and graduated from there at the age of seventeen.

African American families--North Carolina--Greensboro.

African American fathers--North Carolina--Greensboro.

Wesleyan University (Middletown, Conn.).

African American college presidents--North Carolina--Greensboro.

Parents--Death.

African American families--Kentucky--Danville.

Berea College.

African American high school students--Missouri--Saint Louis.

Phillips Academy.

Bennett College (Greensboro, N.C.).

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Jones, Section A2011_023_001_002, TRT: 2:29:02 ?

Frank Jones' mother graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1913. His parents met at the University of Chicago during a summer program. They were married and lived in St. Louis, Missouri and Atlanta, Georgia before his father went to North Carolina, where he became president of Bennett College in 1926. Jones attended the Washington Street Grammar School for seven years, until 1941, when he went to Sumner High School for two years before going to Andover Academy to finish high school. At Andover, Jones progressed to number seven in his class after a trimester, and was a part of Phi Beta Chi Fraternity. During his senior year, Jones recited a piece from the Richard Wright novel, "Black Boy," in the school's oratorical contest. Jones did not place, but on the basis of that speech, he was chosen to speak at the school's commencement on behalf of the class.

African American students--Education (Primary)--Massachusetts--Lawrence.

African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Massachusetts.

University of Cincinnati.

African Americans--Education (Higher)--United States.

African Americans--Marriage--United States.

African American mothers.

African American college presidents--North Carolina--Greensboro.

Bennett College (Greensboro, N.C.).

African Americans--Social life and customs--Missouri--Saint Louis.

African Americans--Social life and customs--Georgia--Atlanta.

University of Chicago.

Phillips Academy.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Jones, Section A2011_023_001_003, TRT: 3:28:58 ?

Frank Jones joined Pi Beta Chi Fraternity while attending Andover Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. He was the only African American in the organization, as there were only two black students attending the school. Upon graduation, Jones went to Harvard University. Jones tells the story of his freshman orientation. He won the freshman and senior competition to be the manager for Harvard University's football team, and was the first black manager. While attending Harvard, he majored in social relations, a mixed major that included sociology, the study of personality, and cultural anthropology. Jones was admitted to the Hasty Pudding Society, and graduated in 1950. When the Korean War began, Jones was drafted into the U.S. Army and was sent to Europe in a segregated field artillery unit and worked in personnel. During this time, Jones attended the Army Language School in Oberammergau, Germany to learn Russian.

Greek letter societies.

African American students--Massachusetts--Andover.

Harvard University--Football.

Sociology--Study and teaching--Massachusetts--Boston.

Korean War, 1950-1953.

United States. Army--African American troops.

Army Language School (U.S.)--Oberammergau (Germany).

Segregation--Military--United States.

African Americans--International travel--Europe.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Jones, Section A2011_023_001_004, TRT: 4:31:35 ?

Frank Jones entered the U.S. Army in 1951 and was discharged in December of 1953. Upon being discharged, Jones found a home in Fort Devens, Massachusetts and was hired at Chaumont Bank, but resigned in 1955 to attend Harvard Business School. After graduating, Jones was hired as an assistant dean and secretary of the faculty at the business school. Jones later went to Scott Paper Company in 1962, and eventually became brand manager of Scott Tissue. Jones earned his M.B.A. from Harvard Business School in 1957. He was offered a tenured position at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the civil engineering department, and after a year, was awarded an endowed chair funded by the Ford Foundation. While at MIT, Jones started a project called TRP-Technology, Race and Poverty-and ran the committee for the Office of Minority Education.

United States. Army--African American troops.

African Americans--Massachusetts--Devens.

Harvard Business School.

African Americans--Education (Higher)--Massachusetts--Boston.

African American college administrators--Massachusetts--Boston.

Scott Paper Company.

African American teachers--Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology--Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Ford Foundation.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Jones, Section A2011_023_001_005, TRT: 5:30:15 ?

Frank Jones discusses his duties with the Office of Minority Affairs at MIT. Jones found that minorities had a poor retention rate. He asked the president to assemble a cabinet to address the issues with minority students, but the president never responded. Jones decided that he needed to leave MIT and went to Morehouse in the fall of 1989, to teach two courses. He discusses the success of the marketing and leadership courses he taught. While there, he mentored students and one was accepted to Harvard Business School. In January of 1992, Jones resigned from MIT, moved to Atlanta, Georgia to retire, and kept his seats on various corporate boards. In 1997, Jones resigned from the CIGNA Board of Directors due to conflicts over the board's treatment of minorities.

African American college administrators--Massachusetts.

Minority college students--Massachusetts.

Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.).

Marketing--Study and teaching--Georgia--Atlanta.

African American social life and customs--Georgia--Atlanta.

Mentoring.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Jones, Section A2011_023_001_006, TRT: 6:17:56 ?

Frank Jones discusses the success of Morehouse College in training minority students in chemistry and mathematics. When Jones returned to Atlanta, Georgia, he went to work with Morehouse College, which received \$1 million to host the Coca-Cola lecture series. Jones helped to organize the event and Warren Buffett was invited to be the first speaker in the series. Buffett praised Jones for his work, and Jones was very touched by his words. He initiated "Buffett Wednesdays" at Morehouse College, in light of Buffett's willingness to become involved with the college. Jones states that attempts were made to eliminate his role in the program, but Buffett stated that he would not participate if Jones was no longer involved. Jones says that he would have liked to write about his experiences and that he wants his legacy to be that he fought for a better MIT, and that he did not compromise in the face of corporate greed.

Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.).

African American college administrators--Georgia--Atlanta.

African American college students--Georgia--Atlanta.

Buffet, Warren.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Coca-Cola Company--Georgia--Atlanta.

Video Oral History Interview with Frank Jones, Section A2011_023_001_007, TRT: 7:12:08 ?

Frank Jones narrates his photographs.