

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Julius Jackson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jackson, Julius, 1944-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Julius Jackson,
Dates:	October 24, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:25:36).
Abstract:	Microbiologist Julius Jackson (1944 -) served as a professor of microbiology and associate dean of the graduate school at Michigan State University. His research examined bacterial genomes to see how genes carry out the physiological processes of the organisms. Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 24, 2012, in Detroit, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_179
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Microbiologist Julius Jackson was born in 1944 to Virgil Lawrence Jackson, Sr. and Julia Esther Jones. He has two siblings, an older brother Virgil and a younger sister, Esther. Jackson attended Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, for one year before he received his A.B. and Ph.D. degrees in microbiology from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas in 1966 and 1969, respectively. He completed a National Institutes of Health (NIH) postdoctoral fellowship from 1969 to 1971 at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Following completion of the NIH fellowship, he continued to work at Purdue University as a postdoctoral research associate. In 1972, Jackson accepted a faculty appointment at the historically black Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee where he worked in a number of positions that included chair of the microbiology department.

In 1987, he joined the faculty of Michigan State University (MSU) in the Department of Microbiology & Public Health, later becoming a full professor and associate dean of the graduate school. From 1991 to 1993, Jackson took a leave of absence from MSU and served as dean of Arts and Sciences at Clark Atlanta University. Jackson directs the J-Lab, a research laboratory that incorporates mathematical and computer models to analyze the function of bacterial genes in cells. Jackson's wife, Dr. Patricia Ann Herring, collaborates with him on their work, which maps bacterial genomes to see how genes carry out the physiological processes of organisms. He has been an active mentor to students in his lab as well as a strong advocate for the importance of integrating math into the study of biology. Furthermore, Jackson has published numerous papers on the latter in addition to bacterial genomics. Beyond his research interests, he has been the director of several programs that recruit, support, and provide professional development to doctoral students in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. These programs include the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Program and the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP), the latter supports underrepresented groups in these fields.

From 1995 to 1997, Jackson was the director of the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Because of his research on model bacterial genomes, he has served on several panels that include the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBM), and the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). Jackson received the William A. Hinton Research Training Award from the ASM for his work on bacterial genomes in 2000.

Jackson has three children, Rahsaan and Sajida with his first wife, the late Jalanda Lazelle Smith, and Ajani, with his wife Dr. Patricia Ann Herring. Jackson and his wife reside in Okemos, Michigan.

Julius Jackson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 24, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Julius Jackson was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 24, 2012, in Detroit, Michigan, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Microbiologist Julius Jackson (1944 -) served as a professor of microbiology and associate dean of the graduate school at Michigan State University. His research examined bacterial genomes to see how genes carry out the physiological processes of the organisms.

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:

Jackson, Julius, 1944-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Jackson, Julius, 1944- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Microbiologist

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 Julius Jackson, October 24, 2012. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 3/26/2025 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 Julius Jackson, Section A2012_179_001_001, TRT: 1:30:37 ?

Julius Jackson describes his family background. His mother, Julia Esther Jackson, was born in Coletown, Kentucky in 1913. She attended Lincoln College in Missouri, where she studied to become a teacher. Jackson describes his maternal family's hasty move from Kentucky to Missouri, following threats from the Ku Klux Klan. His grandmother attended Berea College in the 1890s, and worked as a teacher. Jackson's father, Virgil Lawrence Jackson, Sr., was born in 1906 in Fayette, Missouri. He describes his paternal family history, and talks about his grandfather's and his great uncle's jobs as a mechanic and a millwright. He also talks about his experience of being educated in a segregated school system in Kansas City.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Julius Jackson, Section A2012_179_001_002, TRT: 2:30:16 ?

Julius Jackson was raised in Kansas City, Missouri. During the interview, he describes his childhood memories. He recalls living close to Twelfth and Vine streets, and the entertainers and celebrities he would occasionally see there. Jackson describes his father's experience attending Howard University as a pre-med student and the various businesses he started in Harlem, New York, and later, in Kansas City. He also talks about how his parents met and married, who he takes after and growing up with his two siblings. In this section of the interview, Jackson also discusses baseball stars of the 1940s, Harry "Suitcase" Simpson, and his memories of his father's shop in Kansas City.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Julius Jackson, Section A2012_179_001_003, TRT: 3:31:24 ?

Julius Jackson describes how he helped his father in his shop. He also describes the day-to-day operations in his father's shop, his encounters with members of the Kansas City community, and the prevalence of organized crime in Kansas City in the 1950s. Jackson recalls his father's collection of books and poetry and his parents' interest in music. He began attending school at the age of three, and skipped the first grade. He discusses the importance of social development and why his mother prevented him from skipping any additional grades. Jackson describes his keen interest in science, his early desire to become a scientist, and his love of comic books, which provided images of the scientists who served as his role models. Jackson also discusses his family's non-traditional approach to church, and his own perspectives on church as a social organization.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Julius Jackson, Section A2012_179_001_004, TRT:
4:29:20 ?

Julius Jackson was raised in Kansas City, Missouri. He describes Kansas City, Missouri in the 1950s, and his experience in the newly-integrated Central High School, following the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954. Jackson also talks about the teachers who mentored him in school, and studying mathematics in high school. He emphasizes the importance of learning fundamental concepts in math, and describes how he applies mathematics to his current research in biology. Jackson also talks about his family's financial struggles during the recession of the 1950s, and the support he received from the community.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Julius Jackson, Section A2012_179_001_005, TRT:
5:29:27 ?

After graduating from high school in Kansas City, Missouri, Julius Jackson attended Washington University in St. Louis for a year, before returning to Kansas City Junior College. He then attended the University of Kansas, Lawrence, where he earned his A.B. degree in microbiology in 1966. Jackson continued to pursue studies for his Ph.D. degree there, under the tutelage of his thesis advisor, Christopher Seward, and the chair of the microbiology department, David Paretsky. Jackson's dissertation focused on the effect of iron availability on the physiology of *Listeria monocytogenes*. After earning his Ph.D. degree in 1969, he received an NIH postdoctoral fellowship and pursued training at Purdue University, under the guidance of Edwin Umbarger, the renowned biochemist who discovered the feedback control of metabolism. Jackson also talks about the people who influenced his decision to return to school, his studies of the Russian language in graduate school, and getting married in 1966.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Julius Jackson, Section A2012_179_001_006, TRT:
6:29:38 ?

In 1972, Julius Jackson accepted an assistant professorship in the Department of Microbiology at Meharry Medical College where he worked for fifteen years, eventually becoming chair of department in 1981. Jackson describes his experience at Meharry and his decision to accept a professorship in the microbiology department at Michigan State University in 1987. From 1991 to 1993, Jackson took a leave of absence from Michigan State, to serve as the Dean of Arts and Sciences at Clark Atlanta

University. He describes his research on the evolution of genes and chromosomes, the importance of mathematics to biological studies, and his current work on computationally characterizing the chromosomal composition of bacterial genes. While transitioning from experimental biology to computational theoretical biology, Jackson collaborated with African American mathematicians, and describes his relationship with them. He also talks about his family, and the loss of his first wife.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Julius Jackson, Section A2012_179_001_007, TRT: 7:24:54 ?

From 1995 to 1997, Julius Jackson served as the director of the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF). He describes his experience in this role. Jackson also served as the director of the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate at Michigan State University, where he was involved in professional development professorship programs for graduate and post-doctoral students. In 1996, Jackson was elected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, and in 2000, he received the William A. Hinton Research Training Award from the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). In this section of the interview, Jackson shares his advice for aspiring scientists, and describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He also reflects upon his life and career, and talks about his three children.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.