

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Steve Smith

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Smith, Steve, 1964-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Steve Smith,
Dates:	December 17, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:51:22).
Abstract:	Education administrator Steve Smith (1964 -) was appointed deputy superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools in 2011. Smith was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 17, 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_250
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Education administrator Steve Smith was born in 1964 in Albany, Georgia. After graduating from high school, he attended several institutions of higher education. Smith received both his B.A degree in English education and M.A. degree in education administration from the University of Georgia. He also holds an Ed.S. degree in education management from Troy State University. In 2010, Smith earned his M.B.A. degree after completing the executive format of the University of Georgia's M.B.A. program at Terry College. The program included an international residency to Vietnam and China. In addition, Smith is a graduate of Leadership Atlanta and Leadership Georgia

Smith has over twenty-five years of business leadership experience, ranging from education, marketing and communications to business development and fiscal management. From 1991 to 1997, Smith served as a principal in the Fulton County School System, and was director of administrative services for Georgia Public Broadcasting. Smith served as vice president of corporate responsibility for Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. (TBS), where he directed the review, selection and funding of community non-profit organizations through TBS, Inc.'s corporate philanthropy program. In 2009, Smith founded and served as principal of Steve Smith Consulting, LLC, and became a founding investor and board member of Atlantic Capital Bank – an \$850 million community bank based in Buckhead, Georgia. In 2011, Smith was appointed as the deputy superintendent and chief of staff for Atlanta Public Schools, where he has executive control and direct oversight responsibility for all aspects of the day to day operations of the district.

Smith has also served on the board of directors of numerous organizations, including the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau, Georgia Chamber of Commerce 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, University of Georgia Trustees, University of Georgia Alumni Association, Metro Atlanta Arts & Culture Coalition, Metro Atlanta YMCA, 191 Club and the Atlanta Business League. He has served as a gubernatorial appointment to the Independent Redistricting Task Force, and was a mayoral appointment to the Atlanta Arts & Cultural Funding Task Force.

Steve and his wife, Dr. Debra Smith, lived in Atlanta with their son, Steven, Jr.

Steve Smith was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 17, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Steve Smith was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 17, 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Education administrator Steve Smith (1964 -) was appointed deputy superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools in 2011.

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:

Smith, Steve, 1964-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Smith, Steve, 1964---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Corporate Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Steve Smith, December 17, 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 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 Steve Smith, Section A2012_250_001_001, TRT: 1:29:13 ?

Steve Smith was born on July 19, 1964 in Albany, Georgia to Lois Smith Rushin and John Warren in Albany, Georgia. Both sides of Smith's family originated in southern Georgia, an agricultural area where the primary crops were peanuts and cotton. His maternal grandparents, George Smith and Dorothy Smith, raised nine

children on a farm near Leesburg, Georgia, where Smith's mother was born in 1934. She worked in the fields during her childhood, and as a domestic servant after graduating from the Lee County Training School. Later in life, she attended the Albany Technical Institute in Albany, Georgia, and became a licensed practical nurse. Smith's father was born in 1927 to a family of sharecroppers in Union Springs, Alabama. Smith knew little about his paternal family, as his father was not present during his childhood. His mother never married, and raised eight children on her own. Smith's primary male influence was an older cousin, who encouraged him to pursue a college education.

Video Oral History Interview with Steve Smith, Section A2012_250_001_002, TRT: 2:31:18 ?

Steve Smith lived in the town of Albany, Georgia until the age of three years old, when he moved with his mother and siblings to rural Lee County, Georgia. There, his extended family belonged to the congregation of the New Piney Grove Baptist Church. In 1970, he began his education at Lee County Elementary School in Leesburg, Georgia, where he was supported by his teachers and excelled academically. Smith enjoyed reading from an early age, and was also interested in athletics. He joined the track, baseball, basketball and football teams, which were the only sports available at his school. At the time, the district used an academic tracking system to maintain racial segregation in the classroom. As a result, Smith was often the only student of color in the top section of his class. In 1978, Smith enrolled at Lee County High School, where he was influenced by his English teacher, Elaine Ruckel, and Coach Hugh "Butch" Watts.

Video Oral History Interview with Steve Smith, Section A2012_250_001_003, TRT: 3:28:51 ?

Steve Smith excelled as a student at Lee County High School in Leesburg, Georgia. He was a member of the school newspaper and yearbook staff; the football, baseball, basketball and track teams; as well as the National Beta Club and the National Honor Society. Smith also served as the president of his class for three years. Although the student body was integrated, the school had only a few black instructors, who taught physical and vocational education. During the summers after his freshman and sophomore years, Smith worked for the school custodian through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act; and, the following summer, he secured a position as a sports reporter for the Lee County Ledger. After graduating from high school in 1982, Smith enrolled at Albany Junior College, where he studied English and journalism. With help from Professor James Saville, he became an announcer for WGPC Radio and a sports writer for the Albany Herald. Smith entered the University of Georgia in 1984.

Video Oral History Interview with Steve Smith, Section A2012_250_001_004, TRT: 4:29:20 ?

Steve Smith enrolled in 1984 at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia. He studied English education, and planned to become a teacher and coach. He was influenced by professors like Michael Lomax and Dan Kirby, and joined the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity with his friends, Calvin Ruff and Victor Perry. In 1986, Smith completed his bachelor's degree and began teaching English and managing public relations for the Barrow County School System. There, Superintendent Don Hight encouraged Smith to pursue graduate study. Smith went on to marry Debra Smith in 1989, and earned a master's degree in educational administration from the University of Georgia in 1990. The following year, Smith was hired as the assistant principal of A. Philip Randolph Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia, where he became the principal in 1992. Smith completed an educational specialist degree at Troy State University in 1996, and then became the director of administrative services for Georgia Public Broadcasting in 1997.

Video Oral History Interview with Steve Smith, Section A2012_250_001_005, TRT: 5:29:03 ?

Steve Smith joined Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. as a public relations officer in 2000. In this capacity, he participated in conferences like Leadership Georgia and Leadership Atlanta, where he attended a class taught by Reverend Dr. C.T. Vivian in 2002. He became involved in a number of civic organizations, including the Metro Atlanta Chamber, Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, Metropolitan Atlanta Arts and Culture Coalition, YMCA of Metro Atlanta, Atlanta Business League and 100 Black Men of Atlanta. In 2006, Smith helped found the Atlantic Capital Bank. Two years later, he enrolled at the University of Georgia Terry College of Business, while also serving as the chairman of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau and establishing Steve Smith Consulting, LLC. Smith received his M.B.A. degree in 2010, and was then recruited by Superintendent Erroll Davis, Jr. as the deputy superintendent and chief of staff of the Atlanta Public Schools.

Video Oral History Interview with Steve Smith, Section A2012_250_001_006, TRT: 6:23:37 ?

Steve Smith served as the deputy superintendent and chief of staff of the Atlanta Public Schools. During his tenure, he helped navigate a number of setbacks, including a carbon monoxide leak at Finch Elementary School and the districtwide cheating scandal of 2011. At this point in the interview, Smith talks about his childhood community in Lee County, Georgia; as well as his family, including his wife and son, Debra Smith and Steven Smith, Jr. Smith describes his advice to aspiring community leaders, as well as his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He reflects upon his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered, and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.