

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jefferi Lee

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Lee, Jefferi Keith, 1957-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee,
Dates:	February 1, 2014 and October 24, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013 and 2014
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:04:36).
Abstract:	Television executive Jefferi Lee (1957 -) , general manager of Howard University's WHUT-TV, founded Lee Productions and served as the executive vice president of Black Entertainment Television from 1992 to 1998. Lee was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 1, 2014 and October 24, 2013, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_269
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Television executive Jefferi Keith Lee was born on January 24, 1957 in South Boston, Virginia to General and Nannie Lee. He attended St. Joseph's Catholic School and Robert E. Lee Elementary School, and then graduated from T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. Lee studied radio, television and film at Missouri Valley College and at the University of Maryland in College Park.

In 1979, after working as an intern at the CBS affiliate WDVM-TV in Washington, D.C., Lee was hired as a production assistant for *Morning Break* and *Harambee*. Subsequently, he joined the production staff of television's first weekly newsmagazine show, *PM Magazine*, and became the show's associate producer in 1981. Then, in 1982, Lee was hired as the network operations manager for Black Entertainment Television. He was promoted to executive vice president of network operations in 1992, which expanded his responsibilities to oversee the development of two new BET networks including BET On Jazz: The Cable Jazz Channel, and BET International. Lee left BET as executive vice president in 1998 and founded Lee Productions, a communications consulting firm. Then, from 2005 until 2008, he served as executive director and president of the Bio-Defense Research Group. Lee was named general manager of Howard University's PBS outlet, WHUT-TV, in 2011.

Lee has also been involved in various non-profit organizations where he served on the boards of Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Easter Seals, and as a member of the Georgia Tech Presidents Advisory Board. Lee was also an elder member of the Olive Branch's Elder Board. He serves as the chief executive officer of the Brandon Carrington Lee Foundation with his wife, Tina Mance-Lee, who serves as chief operating officer. Lee has also lectured at Howard University and taught as a visiting professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

Lee and his wife live in Silver Spring, Maryland. They have two sons: Brandon Lee (deceased) and Jefferi Lee, a web developer.

Jefferi Lee was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 24, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jefferi Lee was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 1, 2014 and October 24, 2013, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Television executive Jefferi Lee (1957 -) , general manager of Howard University's WHUT-TV, founded Lee Productions and served as the executive vice president of Black Entertainment Television from 1992 to 1998.

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:

Lee, Jefferi Keith, 1957-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Lee, Jefferi Keith, 1957- --Interviews

African American chief executive officers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Television Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Jefferi Lee, February 1, 2014 and October 24, 2013. 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 Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_001_001, TRT: 1:29:09 ?

Jefferi Lee describes his family's history. His mother, Nannie Jane Carrington,

was born in July of 1934 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After her parents' deaths when she was about eight years old, she moved to South Boston, Virginia to live with her uncle and aunt. She attended Virginia State University for a couple of years, worked at the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and remained active in her community. Lee discusses his mother's death from breast cancer when he was fourteen years old. His father, General Washington Lee, was born in February of 1932 in South Boston. Lee talks about his father's family name, his growing up, and his service in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He also talks about his parents getting married after his father's return from Korea, their different family backgrounds, their move to Alexandria, his father's employment in the D.C. transit system, his likeness to him, and his parents' emphasis on education.

Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_001_002, TRT: 2:28:23 ?

Jefferi Lee and his siblings were raised in Alexandria, Virginia, where he attended a Catholic elementary school, then Robert E. Lee Elementary School, and T.C. Williams High School. He describes his memories of growing up in Alexandria, the demographics of the town, and the neighborhoods where he lived with his family. Lee also talks about the importance of having black male teachers who served as role models, his interest in history and baseball, and his experience in high school. Lee's mother, Nannie Jean Carrington, passed away from breast cancer when he was fourteen years old. He discusses his mother's death in 1971 and his family's life soon afterwards.

Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_001_003, TRT: 3:28:58 ?

Jefferi Lee attended T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. He talks about the teachers who influenced him there, his cross-country school trip, his trip to Canada with his father and siblings, his initial hesitation to attend college, and his older sister's role in taking care of his family after his mother's death. Following high school, Lee decided to attend Missouri Valley College to study radio, television and film, while giving up the opportunity to play football in college. He describes his experience at Missouri Valley College, his transfer to the University of Maryland, College Park in his sophomore year, and his internship at WDVM station in Washington, D.C. Lee also talks about his first job in the mailroom at WDVM, his opportunity to join the management trainee program, his production experience at WDVM, and the other black program directors who were his mentors there.

Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_001_004, TRT: 4:28:20 ?

In 1982, Jefferi Lee left his position at WDVM station in Washington, D.C., to join the newly established Black Entertainment Television (BET). In this section of the interview, he describes his experience at BET in the early days, the growth of the network, and its increased programming, including jazz, news and public affairs programming. Lee also talks about radio and talk-show host, "Petey" Greene, and brand loyalty for BET.

Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_001_005, TRT: 5:10:12 ?

Jefferi Lee describes his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_002_006, TRT: 6:33:12 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_002_007, TRT: 7:29:06 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_002_008, TRT: 8:30:19 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Jefferi Lee, Section A2013_269_002_009, TRT: 9:26:57 ?