

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bernard Beal

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Beal, Bernard B., 1954-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal,
Dates:	December 10, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	11 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:53:26).
Abstract:	Investment banker Bernard Beal (1954 -) was the founder and CEO of M.R. Beal and Company, the nation's oldest continuously operated minority-owned investment bank. Beal was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 10, 2013, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_315
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Investment banker Bernard Beal was born on February 22, 1954 in New York, New York and raised by his grandparents in the South Bronx. An outstanding student, Beal attended the public schools of the South Bronx and later enrolled in the Wooster School in Danbury, Connecticut through the *A Better Chance* program. He graduated there with top honors in 1972. Beal went on to attend and graduate from Carleton College in 1976 with his B.A. degree in economics. He also received his M.B.A. degree from Stanford's Graduate School of Business in 1979.

Upon graduation, Beal began his career on Wall Street as an investment banker with E.F. Hutton & Co. in the tax exempt securities division, where he headed the College and Educational Finance Group and co-founded the Housing Finance Group. Beal then moved on to the corporate finance division, eventually becoming a senior vice president. In 1988, he launched M.R. Beal & Co. in New York City with eight employees and a primary focus on municipal finance. Over the next two decades, M.R. Beal expanded to over forty employees with offices in several cities, including Chicago, Illinois, Dallas, Texas, Walnut Creek, California and Atlanta, Georgia. The firm also expanded its focus to include corporate finance and taxable fixed income securities.

M.R. Beal is the nation's oldest continuously operated minority-owned investment bank and has earned significant recognition, including being cited as one of the "big five" minority-owned investment banks founded in the 1980s. M.R. Beal was also Black Enterprise's Finance Company of the Year in 2001 and 2011. Beal has been on Black Enterprise's list of the most notable African Americans on Wall Street in 1992 and 2003.

Beal has served on the boards of the National Foundation for Affordable Housing, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, the Public Securities Association, and the National Association of Securities Professionals. He was also board chair of *A Better Chance*, where he oversaw the successful financial and programmatic turnaround of the organization. Additionally, Beal served as chairman of the SIFMA Foundation of Investor Education, where he ensured the continuation of the funding for the "Stock Market Game" program to foster knowledge and understanding of the financial markets for

individuals of all backgrounds.

Beal is married to Valerie Lancaster-Beal, an investment banker who serves as a managing director at M.R. Beal. Their son, Michael, is the head of strategy and finance in a business unit of JP Morgan Chase. Their daughter, Erica, is a lead 7th grade teacher with KIPP DC, a public college preparatory charter school.

Bernard Beal was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 10, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Bernard Beal was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on December 10, 2013, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Investment banker Bernard Beal (1954 -) was the founder and CEO of M.R. Beal and Company, the nation's oldest continuously operated minority-owned investment bank.

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:

Beal, Bernard B., 1954-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Beal, Bernard B., 1954---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Investment Banker

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 Bernard Beal, December 10, 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 Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_001, TRT: 1:35:09 ?

Bernard Beal was born on February 22, 1954 in New York City to Virginia Beal and George Gogn, both of whom suffered from diminished mental capacity. Beal's maternal great-grandparents were former slaves who acquired land in Beech Island, South Carolina. Beal had little contact with his father, and was raised by his maternal grandparents, Essie Williamson Beal and John H. Beal, Sr. Beal grew up in their three-bedroom apartment in the Morrisania section of the Bronx, New York, where he lived with his mother; his younger brother, Larry Beal; and his two maternal uncles. To provide for the family, his grandfather worked two full-time positions and three part-time jobs, and his grandmother worked as a housekeeper. When Beal was thirteen years old, his grandfather died, leaving the family with a \$25,000 life insurance policy. They purchased a home, and saved a portion for Beal's college education. At this point in the interview, Beal remembers his grandfather's lessons about hard work and responsibility.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_002, TRT: 2:31:59 ?

Bernard Beal's maternal grandfather, John H. Beal, Sr., refused to accept government assistance or live in public housing. Instead, he worked a number of jobs, and lived in a small tenement apartment in the Bronx, New York. Beal had poor eyesight due to a strabismus disorder, which hindered his early education at P.S. 140. After a teacher threatened to place him in special education classes, Beal's maternal aunt, Ariemae Beal Lonon, paid for the eye surgery and special eyewear to correct his vision, and Beal improved as a student. He attended Grace Gospel Church in the Bronx, where the head pastor, Herbert A. Bente, organized trips for the children to Playland in Rye, New York. In his spare time, Beal enjoyed listening to music by Motown artists like The Temptations and the Four Tops, and watched the television series 'The Man from U.N.C.L.E.' He remembers the women in his neighborhood, including Mrs. Strong. Later in life, he met General Colin L. Powell, who also grew up in the community.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_003, TRT: 3:33:12 ?

Bernard Beal became an excellent student after undergoing corrective eye surgery in the third grade. At times, Beal was teased by his peers for his appearance and his parents' mental deficiencies. Nevertheless, he developed into a confident student at Paul Laurence Dunbar J.H.S. 120, where he was placed in the top classes with the highest performing students. Beal's favorite subject was math, and he won the school wide math contest each year. After the ninth grade, he was accepted into the A Better Chance program, which provided a scholarship to attend the Wooster School in Danbury, Connecticut. To prepare for the rigorous curriculum, Beal was sent to Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts for six weeks. During this time, the program leaders also took the students on a trip to Toronto, Canada. At this point, Beal describes his relationship with his mother, Virginia Beal, who had limited mental abilities. He also remembers meeting Senator Al D'Amato, who had a similar life story.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_004, TRT: 4:30:44 ?

Bernard Beal enrolled in the tenth grade at the Wooster School in Danbury, Connecticut. There, he was assigned to live with a prejudiced white roommate, who immediately requested a room change. Beal became friends with his second roommate, Jan Gleysteen, who went on to work as an architect in Boston, Massachusetts. In addition to his academic work, Beal was assigned to cleaning duty in the dining hall, and was required attend chapel six days a week. Although he was initially confident about his academic abilities, he ranked at the bottom of his class by the end of his first semester. Under the guidance of the

dean of students, Donald Schwartz, Beal improved his grades and eventually became the top student in math. Elected by his peers and confirmed by the headmaster, he was named senior prefect during his final year. Beal also participated on the track and football teams. During the summers, he worked as a camp counselor at the Grace Gospel Church in the Bronx, New York, and at a local Jack in the Box.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_005, TRT: 5:31:52 ?

Bernard Beal graduated from the Wooster School in Danbury, Connecticut in 1972, and decided to defer his college enrollment. Instead, he purchased a share of the Jack in the Box where he worked during the summers as a teenager. There, Beal earned a substantial salary in the role of manager. One night, he was shot in the leg during a robbery at the restaurant. The incident motivated Beal to divest from the establishment, and he enrolled at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. There, he started a records and stereo business, and a transportation service that provided a charter bus to the airport. He eventually grew the bus service to offer an alternative to flying, and transported students to places like Chicago, Illinois and New York City. Through the two ventures, Beal financed his college education, and saved additional funds for graduate school. At this point, Beal describes his experiences of discrimination at the Wooster School and Carleton College.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_006, TRT: 6:32:39 ?

Bernard Beal attended Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, where his classmates included investment banker Gene Saffold and gynecologist Carol Saffold. At this point in the interview, Beal talks about his focus on marriage and starting a family, and his engagement to Wilhelmina Lanier. After graduation, he briefly attended George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C., and then transferred to the Stanford Graduate School of Business in Stanford, California. There, he was mentored by Frankie D. Hughes of Hughes Capital Management, Inc., and Ira D. Hall, who later became the treasurer of IBM. After speaking with his college classmate, Printice Gary, Beal began considering a career in investment banking. He met with executives from Dain, Kalman and Quail, Inc., who told him to look for a position in New York City. Beal then interviewed at E.F. Hutton and Company, and was hired by Richard S. Locke to work in the public finance division.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_007, TRT: 7:30:49 ?

Bernard Beal decided to become an investment banker after earning his M.B.A. degree. He was initially approached by Don Cornwell to join the corporate finance department of the Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. When Beal expressed interest in public finance, Cornwell introduced him to the division's manager, Garland E. Wood. In the end, Beal declined the position, and went to work for E.F. Hutton and Company in 1979. Early on, Beal worked long hours and often slept at the office. He was mentored by Richard S. Locke, Walter J. Lopp and Scott Pierce, who eventually became the president of the company. He also worked with T.M. Alexander, Jr. and John S.R. Shad. During his time at E.F. Hutton and Company, Beal advanced to a senior vice president position. In 1988, he decided to start his own firm, M.R. Beal and Company. Beal also recalls accidentally missing his wedding to his fiancée, Wilhelmina Lanier, and later meeting his wife, Valerie Lancaster-Beal, who worked at Citibank, N.A.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_008, TRT: 8:35:05 ?

Bernard Beal was hired as a municipal bond trader at E.F. Hutton and Company, whose top competitors were Salomon Brothers and Merrill Lynch and Co., Inc. During the 1980s, many African Americans became successful investment

bankers, including Marianne Camille Spraggins, Donald E. Smart and Frederick Terrell. Some black financial officers started their own firms, like Wardell Lazard of W.R. Lazard and Company, and Travers Bell of Daniels and Bell Inc. In 1988, E.F. Hutton and Company's assets were acquired by Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. Shortly afterwards, Beal partnered with Diana L. Taylor to found M.R. Beal and Company. Initially, Beal struggled to find clients, as his contacts were hesitant to work with a small, minority-owned firm. He secured his first contract with Connecticut State Treasurer Francisco L. Borges, and went on to work with politicians like Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson and Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, whom Beal considered a friend.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_009, TRT: 9:32:58 ?

Bernard Beal's M.R. Beal and Company unsuccessfully attempted to enter the corporate finance sector in 1991. When his partner, Diana L. Taylor, left the company around 1994, he recruited Raoul L. Carroll to oversee daily operations and his holdings in Africa. When Carroll left, Beal divested from Africa, and hired Stanley E. Grayson. Prior to the financial crisis of the late 1990s, Beal consolidated his assets under his wife's advisement. He also tried to merge businesses with Maynard Jackson, but was unable to negotiate a deal. Beal's firm continued to conduct million dollar transactions, although many clients were reluctant to work with him because of his minority business enterprise status. In the 2000s, Beal developed an electronic municipal bond exchange. He refused to sell the software outright, and the design was recreated by a majority competitor. After the financial crash of 2008, Beal underwrote a \$25 million bond deal for the City of New York, which he grew into a \$500 million contract.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_010, TRT: 10:38:47 ?

Bernard Beal was wrongfully accused of bribing politicians to secure a \$360 million contract with the State of Milwaukee in the late 1990s. The incident was covered by the press, and Beal lost many of his clients during the subsequent FBI investigation. In the end, he sustained the firm by focusing on his loyal clients, like Walter K. Knorr at the University of Illinois. At this point in the interview, Beal describes his hopes for M.R. Beal and Company after his retirement. He also reflects upon the careers of African American investment bankers like James Reynolds, Jr., Suzanne Shank and Christopher Williams, and black-owned investment banking firms. Beal also describes the careers of his children, Michael Beal and Erica Beal Barnhardt, and his concerns for the African American community. He concludes this part of the interview by reflecting upon his legacy and career.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard Beal, Section A2013_315_001_011, TRT: 11:20:12 ?

Bernard Beal narrates his photographs.