

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bernard J. Tyson

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Tyson, Bernard J., 1959-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bernard J. Tyson,
<b>Dates:</b>	December 17, 2015
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2015
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:05:41).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Chief executive officer and chief executive officer Bernard J. Tyson (1959 - 2019) was the first African American CEO of the \$60 billion healthcare organization, Kaiser Permanente. Tyson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 17, 2015, in San Francisco, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2015_005
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chief executive officer Bernard J. Tyson was born on January 20, 1959 in Vallejo, California to Billie Tyson, a homemaker, and Moses Tyson, a minister. After graduating from Vallejo High School in 1977, Tyson enrolled at Golden Gate University. While still in college, Tyson worked as an administrative analyst for Vallejo General Hospital. He earned his B.S. degree in health service management in 1982, and went on to receive his M.B.A. degree from Golden Gate University in 1984.

In 1984, Tyson accepted a six-month internship at Kaiser Permanente and was then hired full-time in an administrative position. Tyson remained at Kaiser Permanente and in 1992, he was named chief executive officer of the Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Santa Rosa, California. In 1999, he was promoted to senior vice president and chief operating officer for regions outside of California and for Kaiser's brand strategy. In 2004, the organization launched its "Thrive" advertising campaign under Tyson's leadership. In 2006, Tyson was promoted to senior vice president for Health Plan and Hospital Operations, during which time Kaiser opened four new hospitals. In 2010, he was promoted to president and chief operating officer of Kaiser Permanente. As president, he was vocal in his support of the Affordable Care Act, which was signed into law in 2010 and faced significant hurdles. In 2013, he became the company's first African American chairman and chief executive officer.

Tyson served as co-chair of the World Economic Forum's Health Governors Community. He also served on the boards of the American Heart Association, America's Health Insurance Plans, and the International Federation of Health Plans. He was an American Heart Association CEO Roundtable Member and past chairman of the Executive Leadership Council.

Tyson also received many awards and honors over the course of his career. He was a recipient of the NAACP Freedom Act Award in 2001 and was named Golden Gate University's Alumnus of the Year in 2007. He was named among the Most Influential Healthcare Leaders in both 2014 and 2015, and was a recipient of the NAACP

Legal Defense and Educational Fund's 2014 National Equal Justice Award. In 2010, Tyson was named among the Top 25 Minority Executives in Healthcare and Top 25 Most Influential African Americans.

Tyson passed away on November 10, 2019.

Bernard Tyson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 17, 2015.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Bernard J. Tyson was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on December 17, 2015, in San Francisco, California, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Chief executive officer and chief executive officer Bernard J. Tyson (1959 - 2019) was the first African American CEO of the \$60 billion healthcare organization, Kaiser Permanente.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Tyson, Bernard J., 1959-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Tyson, Bernard J., 1959- --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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Kaiser Permanente

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Kaiser Permanente

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## Occupations:

Chief Executive Officer

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Chief Executive Officer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers|MedicalMakers

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## 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 J. Tyson, December 17, 2015. 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).

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## 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 J. Tyson, Section A2015\_005\_001\_001, TRT: 1:33:56 ?

Bernard J. Tyson was born on January 20, 1959 in Vallejo, California to Billie Haynes Tyson and Moses Tyson, Sr. His paternal grandparents, Anna Belle Tyson and Saul Tyson, lived in rural Mississippi, where Tyson's father was born in 1929. His family eventually relocated to New Orleans, Louisiana, while Tyson's father moved to California in the 1940s, where he worked as a carpenter. Tyson's mother was born in Denton, Texas, and moved to Vallejo, California when she was eight years old after the death of her mother, Betty Haynes. There, she was raised by her aunt Rosie Haynes Garrett and uncle Richard Garrett, who was a minister at All Nations Church of God in Christ, in Vallejo, where Tyson's parents met. His father was then trained in ministry by Garrett, and later founded Rescue Mission Church of God in Christ in Vallejo, which Tyson attended each Sunday. Tyson and his six siblings grew up in a house built by their father, which overlooked the coast.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard J. Tyson, Section A2015\_005\_001\_002, TRT: 2:34:49 ?

Bernard J. Tyson worked with his father, Moses Tyson, Sr., as a carpenter in his childhood. Through this experience, he developed a respect for manual labor and architecture. From an early age, Tyson enjoyed listening to a variety of music. His mother and siblings were musicians, and he was exposed to gospel music at Rescue Mission Church of God in Christ in Vallejo, California, where his father was the minister. Tyson's musical interests were also influenced by his cousin, soul musician Sly Stone; and a class trip to a symphony performance. In Vallejo, Tyson attended Farragut Elementary School and Vallejo Junior High School, both of which were integrated. He was then bussed to Springtowne Junior High School, which was in an affluent, predominately white neighborhood. There, he experienced discrimination from classmates and some teachers. During this time, Tyson learned about the Civil Rights Movement from the vice mayor of Vallejo, attorney Lewis G. Brown, who attended his father's church.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard J. Tyson, Section A2015\_005\_001\_003, TRT: 3:32:43 ?

Bernard J. Tyson attended Vallejo Senior High School, in Vallejo, California, for the tenth through twelfth grades. He excelled academically, and refined his writing skills. During these years, Tyson was threatened by a car of racist youths on his way home from his part time job at McDonald's. He rebelled against his parents' religious conservatism to embrace the music of his cousin, Sly Stone, and other popular artists of the time. Tyson's mother and grandmother struggled with diabetes, and their experiences with the medical system inspired his interest in hospital administration. In 1977, he enrolled at Golden Gate University in San Francisco, California to study health management. During this time, he lived with his aunt and uncle Alpha Stewart and K.C. Stewart. Following the completion of his internship, Tyson became an administrative analyst at Vallejo General Hospital, where he was mentored by Jack Manley. In 1983, he returned to Golden Gate University to complete his master's degree.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard J. Tyson, Section A2015\_005\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:29 ?

Bernard J. Tyson began his administrative residency in 1984 at Kaiser Permanente San Francisco Medical Center in San Francisco, California. There, he worked under administrator Alva Wheatley, who hired him as a manager in

1984 to restructure the hospital's outpatient medical records system. He was then promoted to the patient accounting department at Kaiser Permanente's regional office in Oakland, California, before returning to the San Francisco facility as the assistant hospital administrator to Frank Alvarez. In 1992, he became the hospital administrator of the newly-built Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa Medical Center in Santa Rosa, California. After one year, he was promoted to associate regional manager for Kaiser Permanente's Northern California region, where he established smaller markets to better serve the local service areas. He remembers hospital administrators Anthony G. Wagner and Lawrence Brown; and recalls the rise of health management organizations (HMOs) in the 1990s.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard J. Tyson, Section A2015\_005\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:44 ?

Bernard J. Tyson relocated to Maryland in the late 1990s to head Kaiser Permanente in the mid-Atlantic region. At that time, the organization was facing bankruptcy due to its rapid expansion into new markets, and Tyson was responsible for either salvaging or shutting down the company's acquisitions on the East Coast. In 1999, he was appointed chief operating officer of Kaiser Permanente for all regions outside of California. While living in Maryland, Tyson became active in the Washington, D.C. political scene during the transition between the presidential administrations of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. He joined the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and worked closely with Hillary Rodham Clinton on the proposed healthcare reform initiative. During these years, Kaiser Permanente worked with Epic Systems Corporation to build its electronic records system. With advertising firm Campbell Ewald and actress Allison Janney, the organization also created a new marketing strategy known as Thrive.

Video Oral History Interview with Bernard J. Tyson, Section A2015\_005\_001\_006, TRT: 6:25:00 ?

Bernard J. Tyson was tasked by Kaiser Permanente's incoming CEO George Halvorson to develop their brand strategy in 2002. While he initially resisted the role, he came to embrace the challenge of communicating the organization's approach to holistic care to the public. In 2006, he became the senior vice president of health plans and hospitals within Kaiser Permanente, which placed him in line to become a top executive in the organization. In this capacity, Tyson worked closely with two other vice presidents under Halvorson, and became acquainted with Kaiser Permanente's board of directors. In 2012, he was appointed president and chief operating officer of the company, becoming the first African American to hold that position. Tyson describes his vision for Kaiser Permanente, and concludes the interview by reflecting upon his legacy as a CEO as well as his personal legacy.