

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Martin Kilson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Kilson, Martin
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson,
Dates:	October 22, 2016
Bulk Dates:	2016
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:39:07).
Abstract:	Professor Martin Kilson (1931-2019) was the first African American tenured professor at Harvard University, where he taught for forty-two years. He retired in 1999 as the Frank G. Thomson Professor of Government. Kilson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 22, 2016, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2016_103
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Professor Martin Kilson was born on February 14, 1931 in East Rutherford, New Jersey to Reverend Martin Kilson and Louisa Kilson. After his family's move to Ambler, Pennsylvania, Kilson attended Ambler High School, graduating from there as an honor student in 1948. He then attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, where he studied under then university president Dr. Horace Mann Bond. Graduating as class valedictorian, Kilson received his B.S. degree in political science in 1953, and was awarded a John Hay Whitney Fellowship to study at Harvard University, where he earned his Ph.D. degree in political science in 1959.

After finishing his doctorate degree, Kilson spent eighteen months conducting field research in West Africa under a Ford Foundation Fellowship. He then returned to Harvard as a research associate in the Center for International Affairs, and was appointed lecturer in Harvard's Department of Government in 1962. As one of only two African American junior faculty members at Harvard, Kilson also served as the faculty advisor for the newly founded Harvard-Radcliffe Afro-American Students Association during the 1960s. In 1966, he published his first book, *Political Change in a West African State: A Study of the Modernization Process in Sierra Leone*, based on his field research in Sierra Leone. In 1969, Kilson became a full professor of government at Harvard University, making him the first African American professor to gain tenure there. A recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1975, Kilson was instrumental in the development of African American studies both as an academic discipline and as a department at Harvard University. He was appointed the Frank G. Thomson Professor of Government in 1988, a position he held until his retirement in 1999.

In addition to authoring hundreds of academic articles, Kilson also served as a co-editor of numerous essay collections, including *The African Diaspora: Interpretive Essays*, which was the first published work to use the term "African diaspora." He returned to Harvard to deliver the annual W.E.B. DuBois lectures in 2010, and published his book, *The Transformation of the African American Intelligentsia, 1880-2012*, in 2014.

Kilson and his wife, Marion Dusser de Barenne Kilson, had three children: Jennifer, Peter, and Hannah.

Kilson passed away on April 24, 2019.

Martin Kilson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 22, 2016.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Martin Kilson was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 22, 2016, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Professor Martin Kilson (1931-2019) was the first African American tenured professor at Harvard University, where he taught for forty-two years. He retired in 1999 as the Frank G. Thomson Professor of Government.

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:

Kilson, Martin

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Kilson, Martin--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Political Science Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Martin Kilson, October 22, 2016. 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 Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_001, TRT: 1:28:24 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_002, TRT: 2:30:28 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_003, TRT: 3:32:39 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_004, TRT: 4:30:54 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_005, TRT: 5:32:25 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_006, TRT: 6:32:02 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_007, TRT: 7:29:40 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_008, TRT: 8:29:22 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Martin Kilson, Section A2016_103_001_009, TRT: 9:33:13 ?