

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Isaiah Blankson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Blankson, Isaiah, 1944-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Isaiah Blankson,
Dates:	September 26, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2018
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:34:07).
Abstract:	Aerospace scientist Isaiah Blankson (1944 - 2021) was a senior technologist in the Hypersonics Research Division at NASA Glenn Research Center, where he pioneered state-of-the-art air-breathing hypersonic wave riders and novel aircraft engine concepts. Blankson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 26, 2018, in Cleveland, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2018_193
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Aerospace scientist Isaiah Miguel Blankson was born on September 28, 1944, in Cape Coast, Ghana. He received his B.S. degree in 1969, M.S. degree in 1970, and Ph.D. degree in 1973, each in aeronautics and astronautics, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In 1982, Blankson joined General Electric's Corporate Research Center (GRC), in Schenectady, New York, where he conducted research on hypervelocity plasma-armature projectile launchers and gas-dynamic circuit breakers. He went on to join NASA as program director of the Generic Hypersonics program in 1988, and was named deputy director of Hypersonics Research Division, at NASA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., in 1991. He was promoted to senior technologist in the Hypersonics Division at NASA Glenn Research Center, in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1997. Blankson's pioneering work advanced the state-of-the-art air-breathing hypersonic wave riders and aircraft engine concepts. Blankson conducted research on non-equilibrium weakly-ionized plasmas and magneto hydrodynamics (MHD), plasma discharges in dielectric liquids, and magnetic suspension systems.

In 1998, Blankson, an associate fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, served as the U.S. national delegate to the NATO Research and Technology Organization's Working Group on Hypersonic Vehicle Technology. During his career, he worked to prepare the next generation of scientists and engineers in the field, especially underrepresented minorities, by aiding the building of research programs. He led the formation of the NASA-sponsored Center for Aero Propulsion at Hampton University and the NASA Center of Excellence at North Carolina A&T State University, serving as technical monitor and advisor. He also helped develop research programs at the University of Maryland, University of Texas at Arlington, Syracuse University, and other colleges and universities.

At NASA, his contributions to the development of concepts for high-speed air-breathing propulsion resulted in

many awards and patents. Included on his list of patents are the Exoskeletal Gas-Turbine Engine (U.S. patent 6,393,831-B1, 2002) and the Magneto-Hydrodynamic Power (MHD) Controlled Gas Turbine (U.S. patent 6,696,774-B1, 2004). In addition, he co-developed a Method for Weakening Shockwave Strength on Vehicles in Supersonic Atmospheric Flight (2015, US Patent 9,016,632 B1).

Blankson received numerous awards, including the 1969 Luis de Florez Award for excellence in engineering from MIT, the NASA Exceptional Service Medal in 2002, National Emerald Honors Scientist of the Year Award in 2006, two Presidential Rank Awards: the 2006 Meritorious Senior Professional Award and the 2014 Presidential Rank Award of Distinguished Senior Professional, the highest civil servant award granted annually by the U.S. government. In 2018, he was awarded the NASA Exceptional Technology Achievement Medal in recognition of his development of Nonequilibrium Plasma technology for aerospace and terrestrial applications. In 2019, he was selected as an American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Fellow.

Isaiah Blankson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 26, 2018.

Blankson passed away on November 19, 2021, at the age of 77.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Isaiah Blankson was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 26, 2018, in Cleveland, Ohio, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Aerospace scientist Isaiah Blankson (1944 - 2021) was a senior technologist in the Hypersonics Research Division at NASA Glenn Research Center, where he pioneered state-of-the-art air-breathing hypersonic wave riders and novel aircraft engine concepts.

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:

Blankson, Isaiah, 1944-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Blankson, Isaiah, 1944- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Aerospace Scientist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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 Isaiah Blankson, September 26, 2018. 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 Isaiah Blankson, Section A2018_193_001_001, TRT: 1:30:50 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Isaiah Blankson, Section A2018_193_001_002, TRT: 2:28:35 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Isaiah Blankson, Section A2018_193_001_003, TRT: 3:29:45 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Isaiah Blankson, Section A2018_193_001_004, TRT: 4:30:08 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Isaiah Blankson, Section A2018_193_001_005, TRT: 5:28:38 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Isaiah Blankson, Section A2018_193_001_006, TRT: 6:28:44 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Isaiah Blankson, Section A2018_193_001_007, TRT: 7:29:55 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Isaiah Blankson, Section A2018_193_001_008, TRT: 8:07:32 ?