

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bill Costen

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Costen, Bill, 1947-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bill Costen,
Dates:	March 31, 2022
Bulk Dates:	2022
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:03:13).
Abstract:	Hot air balloonist Bill Costen (1947 -) is the first world's first African American Hot Air Balloon Master Pilot. He is the founder of Sky Endeavors, the Costen Cultural Exhibit, the Costen Cultural Virtual Exhibit, and Costen Photography. Costen was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 31, 2022, in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2022_037
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Hot air balloonist Bill Costen was born on November 4, 1947, in Omaha, Nebraska, to Dolores and William T. Costen. He received his B.S. degree in mathematics and psychology in 1970 from Morris Brown College, in Atlanta, Georgia. He also attended the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Costen worked as a Union Pacific Railroad porter from 1965 to 1969. Then, in 1970, he was drafted by the Buffalo Bills professional football team, in Buffalo, New York, before joining their farm team, the Hartford Knights, in Hartford, Connecticut. In Hartford, Costen worked as an insurance underwriter at several insurance companies, including Travelers Insurance, CG/Aetna, and CIGNA, before founding Sky Endeavors, a hot air balloon company, in Bloomfield, Connecticut, in 1975. Since then, Sky Ventures has expanded to include the Costen Cultural Exhibit traveling museum in 1988 and the Costen Cultural Virtual Exhibit in 2022. Costen also founded Costen Photography in 1999. In 2016, Costen received the Ed Yost Master Pilot Award, making him the world's first African American Hot Air Balloon Master Pilot, before retiring from piloting hot air balloons in 2018. In 2021, the documentary film *Balloon Man*, about Costen, and directed by Costen's daughter, Chantal Potter, was released. It received the Film of The Year award at the 2020 Rhode Island Black Film Festival and was also nominated for the 2021 HBO Max Best Documentary at the Run&Shoot Filmworks Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival. Costen was a founding member of the Ebony Chess Society of Hartford, Connecticut, and served as the club's president from 1975 to 1984. He has been a member of the Balloon Federation of America since 1976. From 1977 to 1986, Costen also served as a member of the International Professional Balloon Pilots Racing Association, in addition to serving, since 1989, on the board of directors of the New England Air Museum.

Costen and his wife, Lynda Costen, live in Bloomfield, Connecticut. They have two children, William Jarrell Costen and Chantal Costen Potter. Bill Costen was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 31, 2022.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Bill Costen was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 31, 2022, in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Hot air balloonist Bill Costen (1947 -) is the first world's first African American Hot Air Balloon Master Pilot. He is the founder of Sky Endeavors, the Costen Cultural Exhibit, the Costen Cultural Virtual Exhibit, and Costen Photography.

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:

Costen, Bill, 1947-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Costen, Bill, 1947- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Hot Air Balloon Pilot

HistoryMakers® Category:

EntertainmentMakers

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 Bill Costen, March 31, 2022. 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 Bill Costen, Section A2022_037_001_001, TRT: 1:30:14 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Bill Costen, Section A2022_037_001_002, TRT: 2:29:44 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Bill Costen, Section A2022_037_001_003, TRT: 3:31:11 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Bill Costen, Section A2022_037_001_004, TRT: 4:32:15 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Bill Costen, Section A2022_037_001_005, TRT: 5:30:38 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Bill Costen, Section A2022_037_001_006, TRT: 6:31:48 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Bill Costen, Section A2022_037_001_007, TRT: 7:32:49 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Bill Costen, Section A2022_037_001_008, TRT: 8:24:34 ?

