

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wharton, Clifton R., 1926-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.,
Dates:	April 18, 2006, March 6, 2007, May 12, 2006, May 15, 2007 and May 16, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2006 and 2007
Physical Description:	24 Betacame SP videocassettes (11:17:53).
Abstract:	Economist and academic administrator Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. (1926 -) became the first African American president of Michigan State University and headed the State University of New York. Wharton was also one of the first African American CEOs of a major Fortune 500 company when he led TIAA-CREF. Wharton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 18, 2006, March 6, 2007, May 12, 2006, May 15, 2007 and May 16, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_077
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Pioneering economist and corporate executive Clifton Reginald Wharton, Jr. was born on September 13, 1926, in Boston, Massachusetts. His father, Clifton R. Wharton, Sr., was the first African American to be named Career Ambassador of the United States Foreign Service where he serviced for over four decades. Being the son of a career diplomat, Wharton spent his early childhood years in the Canary Islands, Spain, being tutored by his mother where he became fluent in Spanish.

In 1943, Wharton received his diploma from Boston Latin School and entered Harvard University at age sixteen where he received his B.A. degree in history in 1947. He received his M.A. degree in international affairs from the John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in 1948. Continuing his studies, Wharton received his M.A. degree in 1956 and his Ph. D. in 1958 in economics from the University of Chicago.

Wharton's professional career began in 1948 working with the Rockefeller family's philanthropic interests. He specialized in economic development in Latin America with Nelson A. Rockefeller until 1953. After working as a research associate in economics at the University of Chicago from 1953 to 1957, Wharton joined the Agricultural Development Council, an international organization headed by John D. Rockefeller, III, serving as the Council associate in Malaysia from 1958 to 1964. He was the director of the Council's American Universities Research Program and in 1967 was appointed vice president.

In 1970, Wharton became the first African American president of Michigan State University. After serving as president for eight years, he headed the largest university system in the nation, the State University of New York. During this period, Wharton managed 64 campuses with an enrollment of 370,000 students and an annual budget of more than \$2.5 billion. In 1982, Wharton made history again when he was named chairman of the Rockefeller

Foundation. In 1987, he became one of the first African American CEOs of a major Fortune 500 company TIAA-CREF, which operates the world's largest pension funds holding assets of \$260 billion. Having received numerous presidential appointments, he was appointed by President Clinton as the Deputy Secretary of State, the first African American to ever hold this second highest foreign policy post.

Wharton is married to the former Dolores Duncan. She is chairman and CEO of the Fund for Corporate Initiatives. She is also a director of Capital Bank and Trust Company in Albany, New York.

The Whartons reside in New York City and have two sons Clifton III, and Bruce.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson and Shawn Wilson on April 18, 2006, March 6, 2007, May 12, 2006, May 15, 2007 and May 16, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 24 Betacame SP videocassettes. Economist and academic administrator Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. (1926 -) became the first African American president of Michigan State University and headed the State University of New York. Wharton was also one of the first African American CEOs of a major Fortune 500 company when he led TIAA-CREF.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

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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.

Controlled Access Terms

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

Persons:

Wharton, Clifton R., 1926-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Wharton, Clifton R., 1926- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Economist

University President

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers|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 Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., April 18, 2006, March 6, 2007, May 12, 2006, May 15, 2007 and May 16, 2007. 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 Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_001_001, TRT: 0:29:24 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was born on September 13, 1926 in Boston, Massachusetts to Harriette Banks Wharton and Clifton Wharton, Sr. Wharton's paternal great-great-grandfather, Peter Wharton, was born a free black man in 1793, and bought his wife, Tabitha Wharton's freedom. His maternal grandmother, Mary Pratt Hicks, was a single mother who worked as a chef, and his maternal grandfather, Albert Banks, owned a restaurant in New York City. Wharton's parents met at Boston University, where his mother studied chemistry, and his father attended law school. His father became the first African American to pass the U.S. Foreign Service exam, serving as a distinguished diplomat in Liberia, Spain, and as the ambassador to Romania. As a child living in Liberia and the Canary Islands in Spain, Wharton made lifelong friends. Wharton's mother taught him Spanish, and supervised his correspondence courses from the Calvert School in Baltimore, Maryland. He returned to Boston to live with his maternal grandmother.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_001_002, TRT: 0:31:01 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was raised in the Episcopal church; however, as a young boy, he questioned traditions such as communion and penitence. Upon returning to the United States in 1939, Wharton enrolled at Boston Latin School, where he was influenced by his French teacher, Max Levine, and his Latin teacher. He also joined the history club and French club, and served as the captain of the track team. In 1943, Wharton enrolled at Harvard University, where he majored in history, with aspirations of pursuing a career in the U.S. Foreign Service like his father, Clifton R. Wharton, Sr. As one of only four black students at Harvard University, Wharton became the first African American announcer and program director at the campus radio station, WHRV Radio. As an alumnus of Boston Latin School and Harvard University, Wharton forged lifelong networks and connections, meeting individuals like actor Jack Lemmon, musician Tom Blair Lehrer and announcer Martin Bookspan.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_001_003, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., met his wife, Dolores D. Wharton, as a student at Harvard University. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1945, and completed basic training at Tuskegee Army Airfield in Tuskegee, Alabama, where he encountered a racist sergeant. He passed his first pilot's test, despite enduring racist remarks from his test pilot. He returned to Harvard University, and graduated in 1947. Wharton then enrolled at the School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C., to prepare for the U.S. Foreign

Service Exam. As the first African American to be admitted to the school, he focused on his studies, and graduated second in his class. Wharton experienced discrimination in Washington, D.C., particularly while visiting a friend at the Willard Hotel. Wharton served as secretary for the U.S. National Student Association, and advocated for the organization to take a stance against discrimination.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_001_004, TRT: 0:09:58 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. narrates his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_002_005, TRT: 0:30:23 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. attended Harvard University, where he studied diplomatic history, ran on the track team, and was the first African American to work at the university's radio station, WHRV Radio. Inspired by the Marshall Plan, initiated by U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall, Wharton decided to pursue a career in foreign assistance; and upon graduating, joined Nelson Rockefeller's non-profit program at the American International Association for Economic and Social Development, working primarily in Latin America. He was eventually promoted to head of reports and analysis. Wharton was encouraged by his mentor, James G. Maddox, to pursue a Ph.D. degree in economics at the University of Chicago, where he was taught by Theodore W. Schultz, Frank Knight and Milton Friedman. Wharton was then recruited by Arthur T. Mosher to join the Agricultural Development Council. He talks about his decision to work in economic development; and his courtship with his wife, Dolores D. Wharton.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_002_006, TRT: 0:30:50 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. married Dolores D. Wharton in 1950 at the studio of singer Marian Anderson in Danbury, Connecticut. Wharton worked for Nelson Rockefeller at the Rockefeller Foundation from 1948 to 1953, serving primarily in Latin America. Upon earning his Ph.D. degree in economics from the University of Chicago, he was recruited to John D. Rockefeller III's Agricultural Development Council, and served in Southeast Asia from 1958 to 1964. When Wharton returned to the United States, he became the director of the American Universities Research Program, and built relationships with universities across the United States. He was also a visiting professor at Stanford University. In 1970, Wharton was selected as president of Michigan State University, becoming the first African American to assume this role. He recalls his wife's partnership during his presidency; the challenges that he faced; and his achievement of increasing minority enrollment and graduation rates over his eight-year tenure.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_002_007, TRT: 0:29:37 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. served on the Agricultural Development Council in Southeast Asia, and as an advisor to the U.S. Department of State during President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. In this capacity, Wharton advised the Vietnamese government on a fair rice price policy for its farmers. He also published his discussion about the Green Revolution in Asia in Foreign Affairs magazine, which was well-received. Wharton served as the president of Michigan State University for eight years, where the Clifton and Dolores Wharton Center for the Performing Arts was later established in honor of his and his wife, Dolores D. Wharton's commitment to the arts. In 1978, Wharton

became chancellor of the State University of New York System. Under his leadership, the university system developed public service programs through a network of business development centers, in order to aid small businesses. He also appointed an external committee to advise and update the university's bureaucratic management processes.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_002_008, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.'s wife, Dolores D. Wharton, founded the Young Executives Program to offer women and minorities an opportunity to interact with leaders across various professions. Wharton was appointed as the chairman and CEO of the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America - College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF) in 1987, becoming the first African American CEO of a Fortune 500 company. Similar to his Presidential Fellows mentorship program at Michigan State University, he mentored staff members at TIAA-CREF through shadow training. At TIAA-CREF, Wharton improved working conditions through internal teamwork. He also hired Thomas W. Jones as the chief financial officer at TIAA-CREF, reduced the company's personnel turnover rate, and doubled assets in six years. Wharton reflects upon being a pioneer in the African American community; and the underlying goals of programs such as affirmative action.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_002_009, TRT: 0:26:32 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, specifically the underlying challenges faced by the community; practical and progressive policies to allow for socioeconomic progress, and his concerns over global animosity toward ethnic and cultural differences. Wharton also reflects upon his life and career, his father, Clifton R. Wharton, Sr.'s career as a U.S. Foreign Service diplomat, the value of oral history projects and how he would like to be remembered. Wharton's autobiography, 'Privilege and Prejudice: The Life of a Black Pioneer,' details his experience with stereotypes and other aspects of his career as a pioneer in three fields.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_003_010, TRT: 0:30:23 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.'s paternal family moved from Baltimore, Maryland to Boston, Massachusetts, where his grandmother, Rosalind Wharton, and aunt, Enola Wharton, died in a fire. Education was important to his paternal family; many of whom became ministers, physicians and school teachers. His mother, Harriette Banks Wharton, was raised in Boston by her single mother, Mary Pratt Hicks. Wharton's parents met at Boston University, where his father attended law school and his mother studied chemistry. She taught at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute until marrying Wharton's father, who worked as a law clerk for the U.S. Department of State, before becoming the first African American U.S. Foreign Service officer. Wharton spent his early childhood overseas at his father's diplomatic posts in Liberia and the Canary Islands, and his mother tutored him through a correspondence course administered by the Calvert School. Wharton describes his parents' personalities; and the close-knit black community in Boston.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_003_011, TRT: 0:29:23 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. spent his early childhood in Liberia and the Canary Islands, where his father, Clifton R. Wharton, Sr., served as a diplomat in the

U.S. Foreign Service. He had three siblings; William Wharton, Richard Wharton and Mary Wharton Sampson. He made lifelong friends while living overseas, and became immersed in different cultures and celebrations, including Christmas and Three Kings Day. Wharton became fluent in Spanish while living on the Canary Islands, where his mother, Harriette Banks Wharton, tutored him on his correspondence coursework from The Calvert School in Baltimore, Maryland. He returned to the United States in 1936, to live in Roxbury, Massachusetts with his maternal grandmother, Mary Pratt Hicks. Wharton enrolled at Boston Latin School, where he recalls the influence of his French teacher, Max Levine, and his Latin teacher, Mr. Roche. During his time at Boston Latin School, Wharton made lasting friendships, and some of his classmates also joined him at Harvard University.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_003_012, TRT: 0:28:25 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.'s early schooling in the Canary Islands was achieved via correspondence from the Calvert School in Baltimore, Maryland. During a temporary stay in the United States, he attended Nathan Hale School in Roxbury, Massachusetts, where he was first exposed to racism and the concept of passing for white. Wharton returned to Boston, Massachusetts permanently to live with his maternal grandmother, Mary Pratt Hicks. In Boston, Wharton's next door neighbor was Dr. George Clayton Branche, Jr.; and each summer, he attended Camp Atwater, which was established by Minister William DeBerry in 1921. There, Wharton was exposed to African American culture. Wharton also took piano lessons with his mother at an early age, which he continued in Boston in addition to songwriting. Wharton attended Boston Latin School for six years, and graduated in 1943. His mother and siblings returned to the United States during World War II. Soon after, Wharton's parents separated.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_003_013, TRT: 0:31:09 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was admitted to Bowdoin College and Boston University, but chose to matriculate at Harvard University. He initially struggled academically, but quickly became acclimated to the lecture based curriculum. To maintain his overall grade point average, he enrolled in a Spanish course, in which he excelled due to his fluency in Spanish. Wharton was one of only four black students in his class. He joined the track team, and the university's radio station, WHRV Radio. He was also involved in the founding of the U.S. National Students Association, becoming its first secretary. In 1945, Wharton enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II. During basic training at Tuskegee Air Force Base, Wharton experienced overt racism for the first time when his application was questioned, and his test pilot disqualified many skilled pilots using racial insults to distract them. He also talks about combating the low expectations of African Americans that he encountered throughout his schooling and career.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_003_014, TRT: 0:30:49 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. attended Harvard University, where he majored in U.S. diplomatic history, and completed an honors thesis on Argentinian beef, and foot and mouth disease. He was also the first African American announcer on Harvard's radio station, WHRV Radio. Wharton went on to earn his master's degree in international affairs from the School of Advanced International Studies (SIS) at John Hopkins University. There, he decided to study technical assistance and economic development, a developing area of U.S. Foreign Policy

introduced by George Marshall. Wharton was encouraged by his SIS professor, Simon Hansen, to interview with the American International Association for Economic and Social Development (AIA); and was hired to work with Norman Rockefeller as an executive trainee. His mentor, James G. Maddox, encouraged him to attend the University of Chicago to earn his Ph.D. degree in economics; and there, he worked as a research assistant for economist Theodore W. Schultz.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_003_015, TRT: 0:30:44 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. married Dolores D. Wharton in 1950, at the studio of her family friend, opera singer Marian Anderson, in Danbury, Connecticut. Following the birth of their first son, Clifton Wharton III, the family moved to Chicago, Illinois, where Wharton began his doctoral studies in agriculture economics at the University of Chicago, with a focus on Brazil. He was taught by famous economists such as Theodore W. Schultz, D. Gale Johnson, and W. Allen Wallis. With his experience in Latin America through the American International Association for Economic and Social Development, Wharton joined Schultz to conduct an evaluation for the National Planning Association about U.S. technical assistance in Latin America. He recalls his social life in Chicago, where his wife managed the household on a tight budget. Wharton was then recruited to the Agriculture Development Council, and served in Asia. Wharton also talks about the Rockefeller brothers, especially Nelson Rockefeller's philanthropic organizations.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_003_016, TRT: 0:30:59 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. worked with Arthur T. Mosher as an associate at the Agriculture Development Council (ADC), travelling to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia. He created ADC fellowship programs that allowed promising candidates to further their education in the United States. As a result, several of the program's recipients advanced to high ranking positions in their home nation's central government, banking sectors, and academia. Wharton returned to the United States to serve as director of ADC's American Universities Research Program, and developed a program that arranged for faculty members to gain experience in foreign relations. He also facilitated workshops and conferences to teach American scholars and researchers about Southeast Asia. Wharton recalls race relations in Southeast Asia and in the United States during the 1960s; and his discussions with U.S. officials about the exploitation of Vietnamese farmers under the Vietnamese government's unfair trade practices.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_004_017, TRT: 0:29:09 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. worked with the Agriculture Development Council (ADC) in Southeast Asia for six years, where he focused on establishing fellowship programs to facilitate higher learning in agricultural economics. Upon returning to the United States, he worked with universities to provide insight into the developmental problems in Asia; through workshops, seminars, and conferences, and his book publication, 'Subsistence Agriculture and Economic Development.' He also became the vice president of the ADC. Wharton was considered for leadership roles at a number of universities, and accepted a nomination to become president of Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. In 1969, Wharton was appointed to the board of Equitable Life Assurance Society of America, becoming the third African American to serve on a corporate board, following Robert C. Weaver and Samuel Pierce.

Wharton also talks about his political views on Vietnam during his service there.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_004_018, TRT: 0:31:13 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was nominated by dentist Blanche Martin as the president of Michigan State University; and was elected in 1970, amid internal dispute over the presidency, in a five to three vote by the university's elected board of trustees. Wharton's early years as president were challenged by issues of student riots in Michigan, and administrative pressure from board members who did not favor his election. During the course of his presidency, he focused on increasing the university's overall enrollment, retention and graduation rates, and maintaining the corresponding rates among its minority student population. Wharton and his wife, Dolores D. Wharton, worked to establish a rapport with students, and increase student body participation in government. Wharton also made administrative changes that led to effective long-term university leadership. He talks about the evolution of corporate boards, and the shift in responsibilities for corporate board members.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_004_019, TRT: 0:31:12 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was elected as the president of Michigan State University in 1970. There, he handled obstacles like student political demonstrations, which were ongoing at higher educational institutions across Michigan. Wharton accessed his new position and environment, before developing and announcing the goals and strategy of his presidency. Wharton and his wife, Dolores D. Wharton, made themselves accessible to the student body, and remained actively engaged in student life. His wife also developed the university's first fundraising program. Wharton addressed issues of multicultural differences by urging his students to embrace the diversity that they were exposed to on campus. During his presidency, Wharton also witnessed minority student demonstrations against the lack of black coaches and officials in the NCAA conference. When the football team was accused of violating NCAA rules, Wharton appointed a special committee to investigate these allegations, as per standard NCAA procedure.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_004_020, TRT: 0:31:00 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. served as president of Michigan State University from 1970 to 1978. During his tenure, he led an NCAA investigation to address allegations against the university's football team. He also recruited Magic Johnson to the university's basketball team, and became acquainted with the Big Ten Conference procedures. Wharton established the College of Urban Development, and emphasized the importance and visibility of the arts on campus. He worked with his wife, Dolores D. Wharton, in advocating for a performing arts center on campus, which was christened Clifton and Dolores Wharton Center for the Performing Arts. He also established the lifelong education program, and the Presidential Fellows Program. In 1978, Wharton was appointed chancellor of the State University of New York System (SUNY), where he managed sixty-four campuses across the state. As a member of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, Wharton talks about the impact of college athletics on higher education.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_005_021, TRT: 0:29:42 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was appointed as the chancellor of the State University of New York System (SUNY) in 1978, overseeing sixty-four campuses and

380,000 students. He visited each campus over the first ten months of his tenure, to understand their challenges and to prioritize his actions. Wharton established SUNY's first public service program, as a network of business development centers at various campuses. Over his tenure, he was involved in appointing fifty-seven presidents at SUNY's campuses, establishing sabbatical provisions for the university presidents, and working to reduce the state's restrictive regulation of the university system's funds. Wharton and SUNY founder, Nelson Rockefeller, made preliminary plans to create a government affairs and public policy center. Following Rockefeller's sudden death, Wharton and the SUNY board of trustees established the Nelson Rockefeller College of Public Affairs in Albany, New York in Rockefeller's honor.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_005_022, TRT: 0:31:15 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. served as chancellor of the State University of New York System (SUNY) for nine years, the longest term in its history. During his tenure, he fostered a productive relationship with the board of trustees. Wharton achieved flexibility legislation, ending long-time overregulation by the state government. He also obtained permission to increase private fundraising. During Governor Hugh Carey's tenure, Wharton persuaded the state legislature to override the governor's veto against SUNY's proposed budget increase, the first such incident in New York City in over twenty-five years. Wharton's wife, Dolores D. Wharton, established the Fund for Corporate Initiatives and the Young Executives Program, offering mentorships, particularly to women, minorities and young executives. Wharton also talks about his decision to decline positions with the administrations of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_005_023, TRT: 0:29:23 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. was appointed CEO of Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America - College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF) in 1987, the world's largest pension fund, becoming the first African American to head the organization. Through his early assessments as CEO, he reconfigured the company's offices, reducing the personnel turnover rate from 25 percent to 8 percent. During his six-year tenure, Wharton doubled TIAA-CREF's assets by making funds available to beneficiaries, accessing new parts of the market, and successfully challenging his competitors in the financial industry. In addition, Wharton increased the number of women and minorities on TIAA-CREF's boards of trustees, initiated corporate social responsibility, and established the special assistants program. He also recruited Thomas W. Jones as CFO of TIAA-CREF. Wharton was appointed deputy secretary of state by President Bill Clinton, but resigned due to disagreements with Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Video Oral History Interview with Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Section A2006_077_005_024, TRT: 0:06:05 ?

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. concludes the interview by reflecting upon his life, his marriage to Dolores D. Wharton, and his career. He recalls his father's reaction to his appointment as president of Michigan State University, and editorials regarding his service as U.S. Deputy Secretary of State.