

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Cullen L. Dubose

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Dubose, Cullen L., 1935-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Cullen L. Dubose,
Dates:	June 10, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2010
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:26:24).
Abstract:	Construction executive Cullen L. Dubose (1935 - 2022) was the chief operating officer for Painia Development Corporation from 1977 to 2008, and was appointed to the Michigan Economic Growth Authority in 2003 by Governor Jennifer Granholm. Dubose was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 10, 2010, in Detroit, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2010_046
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Construction Executive Cullen L. Dubose was born on July 5, 1935 in Moss Point, Mississippi. Dubose attended Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi and received his B.S. in Civil Engineering from Tri-State University in Angola, Indiana in 1958. Dubose also attended graduate school in housing and finance at Michigan State University.

From 1958 to 1969, Dubose worked as a Bridge Design Engineer, Civil Engineer, Structural Draftsman, and Highway Draftsman for the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation in Lansing, Michigan. During much of that time, Dubose also worked as a Civil Engineer for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. From 1977 to 2008, Dubose was the Chief Operating Officer for Painia Development Corporation, a minority-owned company that provides comprehensive site selection advice and evaluates sites along with design builds for corporations looking to locate or relocate their facilities such as distribution centers, call and data centers, warehouses and manufacturing facilities. Dubose was featured in several articles on urban renewal and housing markets, including an article in Reader's Digest entitled, "Tales of Two Cities: Renewal in Detroit and Jersey City."

Dubose sat on numerous boards including the Michigan Economic Growth Authority, to which Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm appointed him in 2003. He was also a board member of the National City Corporation for Michigan Multi-Cities, the secretary for the Michigan Housing Council, a member of the Board of Directors for the Detroit Investment Fund, a member of the Michigan Minority Business Development Council, and a member of the African American Association of Businesses and Contractors. Dubose sat on the Board of Directors for the University Cultural Center Association and for Tougaloo College, and he was the recipient of several awards, including the Omega Psi Phi Citizens Award and the NAACP Citizens Award. Dubose was married to Helena Joyce and had three children: Cheri, Cullen, and Freddie.

Cullen Dubose was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 8, 2010.

Cullen Dubose passed away on November 13, 2022 at the age of 87.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Cullen L. Dubose was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 10, 2010, in Detroit, Michigan, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Construction executive Cullen L. Dubose (1935 - 2022) was the chief operating officer for Painia Development Corporation from 1977 to 2008, and was appointed to the Michigan Economic Growth Authority in 2003 by Governor Jennifer Granholm.

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:

Dubose, Cullen L., 1935-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dubose, Cullen L., 1935- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Tri-State University

Occupations:

Construction Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Cullen L. Dubose, June 10, 2010. 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 Cullen L. Dubose, Section A2010_046_001_001, TRT: 0:30:35
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Cullen L. Dubose was born on July 5, 1935 in Moss Point, Mississippi to Shoffie Edwards DuBose and Howard DuBose. His maternal grandfather, Charles Edwards, was the son of a white woman and an enslaved black man, and spent the first part of his life with his wife, Loulu Stokes Edwards, on a farm in Alabama. Dubose's grandfather eventually left for the Gulf Coast, where he remarried and passed as white to start a business. Dubose's paternal grandparents, Ida Knight DuBose and Gould DuBose, left their home in the Carolinas to develop a homestead in Monroeville, Alabama, where they amassed two thousand acres of land. Dubose's father worked there until marrying Dubose's mother, and then moved to Moss Point, where he secured a position at a paper mill. Dubose's father went on to acquire two buses that he used to transport workers to the mill. He also built a large vegetable garden, which Dubose was responsible for harvesting and selling to the community.

Video Oral History Interview with Cullen L. Dubose, Section A2010_046_001_002, TRT: 0:30:59
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Cullen L. Dubose was the youngest of ten children born to Shoffie Edwards DuBose and Howard DuBose. Dubose and his siblings were influenced by their father, who was frugal, stern and hardworking. He was also well known among both the black and white residents of Moss Point, Mississippi, which granted his family certain privileges, including the right to vote, in the otherwise segregated community. In Moss Point, Dubose grew up in a home his father built, and attended Sunday school and church services at the local Methodist church. He began his education at the all-black Magnolia Elementary School, where he faced discrimination from the white superintendent, who barred the black students from learning to type. Several of Dubose's siblings left home to complete their educations, and went on to become business owners. His oldest brother, Lawrence DuBose, opened a barbershop and laundromat; and another of his brothers, Norris DuBose, owned a restaurant near Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Video Oral History Interview with Cullen L. Dubose, Section A2010_046_001_003, TRT: 0:29:52
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Cullen L. Dubose attended the all-black Magnolia Elementary School and Magnolia High School in Moss Point, Mississippi. At that time, the schools were administered by a racist white superintendent, who required the teachers to raise money to buy him a car. The superintendent also restricted the students' coursework, and forced the black faculty to teach basic skills, like essay composition, during lunch periods. After graduating, Dubose matriculated at Mississippi's Tougaloo Southern Christian College, where he studied engineering. After two years, he transferred to the Tri State College in Angola, Indiana; and, upon graduating, found work as a bridge designer at the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation in Lansing, Michigan. There, Dubose struggled to find housing due to the city's discriminatory laws and the construction of Interstate 496 in the black community. In response, he became the chairman of the NAACP housing committee, and advocated to compensate the displaced residents.

Video Oral History Interview with Cullen L. Dubose, Section A2010_046_001_004, TRT: 0:29:33
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Cullen L. Dubose worked in the bridge building division of the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation in Lansing, Michigan. During this time, he was active with the NAACP housing committee, which opposed the department's construction of Interstate 496 in the black community. In reprisal, Dubose was denied assignments at work, and was forced to spend his days

sitting quietly at a desk. In 1969, he accepted an engineering position at the newly created Michigan State Housing Development Authority. There, he served as the director of the construction, managing and marketing departments in Lansing, before transferring to Detroit, Michigan to work on Project Rehab, which was modeled on the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. In 1977, Dubose left the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to found the Painia Development Corporation. His first project was a multi-unit housing development in Coldwater, Michigan, which was funded by mortgages from the Farmers Home Administration.

Video Oral History Interview with Cullen L. Dubose, Section A2010_046_001_005, TRT: 0:29:11
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Cullen L. Dubose was the founder and chief operating officer of the Painia Development Corporation, a real estate development firm in Detroit, Michigan. He often faced racial discrimination from majority banks and housing agencies while trying to obtain loans and close on properties; and, during the company's first project with the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), he hid in his car during meetings, so that the FmHA did not know that the firm was owned by an African American. Dubose concealed his race throughout most of his career with the Painia Development Corporation, and opted not to obtain state certification as a minority owned business. He eventually hired his son, Freddie Dubose, whom he trained to take over the company. In 2003, Dubose was appointed to the Michigan Economic Growth Authority by Governor Jennifer Granholm. He also served on the board of his alma mater, Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi, where he oversaw the renovation of the Woodworth Chapel.

Video Oral History Interview with Cullen L. Dubose, Section A2010_046_001_006, TRT: 0:33:01
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Cullen L. Dubose's firm, the Painia Development Corporation, partnered with real estate developer A. Alfred Taubman to build the Lester Morgan Cultural Gardens housing complex in Detroit, Michigan. Although the Lester Morgan Cultural Gardens was originally planned to be a high income housing development, Detroit Mayor Coleman Young required the developers to include more units for low income residents. After Mayor Young completed his term, Dubose and the Painia Development Corporation worked under the mayoralties of Dennis Archer and Kwame Kilpatrick. Under Archer's administration, Dubose's firm encountered obstacles from the mayor's office while completing projects like the Marketplace Court. During Kilpatrick's subsequent administration, Dubose was appointed to the board of the Detroit Investment Fund, but left due to the organization's inefficacy and corruption. Dubose concludes this part of the interview by reflecting upon his life, as well as his hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Cullen L. Dubose, Section A2010_046_001_007, TRT: 0:23:13
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Cullen L. Dubose and his wife, Helena DuBose, raised three children, all of whom attended historically black colleges. His youngest son, Freddie DuBose, took over responsibility for the Painia Development Corporation as Dubose neared his retirement. Dubose talks about his parents' thoughts on his career, and reflects upon his life and legacy. He concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.