

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Billy Joe Evans

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Evans, Billy Joe, 1942-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans,
Dates:	October 22, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	10 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:34:24).
Abstract:	Chemist and chemistry professor Billy Joe Evans (1942 -) was the former director and professor in the Materials Science Department at Howard University and a professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Michigan. Evans was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 22, 2012, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_177
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chemist and chemistry professor Billy Joe Evans was born on August 18, 1942 in Macon, Georgia. Evans grew up amidst the racism and segregation policies of the south during the 1950s. Evans' father, Will Evans, worked part-time as a coordinator for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and went to Washington, D.C. to confer and strategize with founder and President A. Philip Randolph about how labor issues facing African American in Macon. In 1959, he graduated from Ballard High School, the largest high school in Macon, Georgia. Following graduation, Evans entered Morehouse College and he received his B.S. degree in chemistry in 1963. Evans went on to pursue graduate studies at the University of Chicago. The State of Georgia paid the tuition difference between the University of Georgia and the University of Chicago, and in 1968 Evans earned his Ph.D. degree in chemistry. His Ph.D. thesis was entitled: "Order-disorder phenomena and hyperfine interactions in Spinel ferrites."

Evans accepted a position on the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1970 after performing some post-doctoral work at the University of Manitoba and teaching at Howard University. He has held research positions at the University of Marburg, the Naval Research Institute, and the Ford Motor Company. Evans initially started his work at the University of Michigan as an assistant professor of geology and mineralogy, but he joined the chemistry department as an associate professor in 1974. Evans has continued to pursue his research in solid state chemistry. His primary interests include the synthesis and characterization of crystal/chemical structures properties that directly affect the quality of human environments. His contributions to the field were recognized by the University of Michigan who promoted him to full professor in 1986. Evans is the principal or co-author of more than 90 scientific publications. Evans is the principal or co-author of more than 90 scientific publications. He has been invited to give lectures at the National Conferences on Magnetism and Magnetic Materials, the International Conference on Magnetism, Gordon Conferences and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Advanced Study Institute. Evans was named professor emeritus of the University of Michigan in 2007.

Evans has been the recipient of many honors and prizes for his dedication to the improvement of the quality and

accessibility of higher education for all students and for his work in the sciences. In 1991, he was honored with the Statewide Distinguished Faculty Award. He received the 1997 American Chemical Society Camille and Henry Dreyfus Award for Encouraging Disadvantaged Students in Careers in the Chemical Sciences. Evans' professional awards include the 1995 Manufacturing Chemists Association Catalysts Award, the 1997 American Chemical Society Camille and Henry Dreyfus Award for Encouraging Disadvantaged Students in Careers in the Chemical Sciences. The following year Evans was named the winner of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering by the National Science Foundation.

Billy Joe Evans was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on 10/22/2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Billy Joe Evans was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 22, 2012, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was recorded on 10 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Chemist and chemistry professor Billy Joe Evans (1942 -) was the former director and professor in the Materials Science Department at Howard University and a professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Michigan.

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:

Evans, Billy Joe, 1942-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Evans, Billy Joe, 1942- --Interviews

African American chemists--Interviews.

African American professors--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Chemist

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 Billy Joe Evans, October 22, 2012. 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 Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_001, TRT: 1:29:47 ?

Billy Joe Evans describes his family background. His mother, Mildred Owens, was born in December of 1920 in Fitzgerald, Georgia. Although she was known to have had a good mind, she only finished elementary school. She was a homemaker and mother to eight children before her passing, in 1958. Evans' father was born Niles Roundtree in Sallis, Mississippi in 1890. He worked as a fireman and legally changed his name to Will Evans upon his move to Macon, Georgia, where Evans was born in 1942. Evans describes his parents' personalities and who he takes after.

African American families.

African American mothers--Georgia.

African American fathers--Mississippi.

Childhood.

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_002, TRT: 2:29:40 ?

Billy Joe Evans grew up in Macon, Georgia. He has seven siblings; his eldest brother, Willie Allen Evans, became a Julliard trained opera singer. Although his mother died when he was a teenager, Evans attributes his and his eldest siblings' academic success to her influence on their lives. Evans and his family attended Fulton Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia, where he honed his public speaking skills. Evans also attended G.W. Carver Elementary School in Macon. Although he was a good student from an early age, his academic aspirations flourished by the fourth grade.

Childhood--Georgia.

Large family.

Baptists--Georgia.

Education, Primary--Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_003, TRT: 3:29:27 ?

Billy Joe Evans began grade school at G.W. Carver Elementary School in Macon, Georgia. In 1955, he went on to attend Ballard Hudson High School, which was the largest high school for African Americans in Georgia at the time. Although Evans focused on science in high school, he was not captivated by the scientific and technological developments taking place during the time. His favorite teachers were George Espey, his eleventh grade English teacher, and Phalba Pitts, his eleventh grade social studies teacher. Ms. Pitts was instrumental in his early admission to Morehouse College, which freed him from having to complete his senior year of high school. In 1959, Evans began his studies at Morehouse College, where he made a concerted declaration of his disinterest in the medical field.

Education--Georgia.

Mentoring in education.

Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.).

Teachers--Influence.

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_004, TRT: 4:29:14 ?

Billy Joe Evans attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. After being impressed with Dr. Henry McBay's chemistry lectures in his freshman year, Evans decided to pursue his B.S. degree in chemistry. Evans found McBay's teaching methods to be very effective and later adopted them when he was a professor at the University of Michigan. During his time at Morehouse, Evans was classmates with Dr. David Satcher, Amos Brown, Dr. Isaac Willis and Amos N. Wilson, all of which became distinguished professionals in their respective fields. Evans discusses the distinctions between doctors and scientists and talks about how his perception about doctors has evolved over the course of his life. He recalls a particularly pivotal incident where his wife was in critical care, and an emergency room doctor made a decision, against protocol, that saved her life.

Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.).

McBay, Henry C.

Chemistry--Study and teaching (Higher).

Medicine.

Satcher, David, 1941-

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_005, TRT: 5:29:29 ?

Billy Joe Evans graduated from Morehouse College in 1963 with his B.S. degree in chemistry. He married his wife, Addie Bell, shortly thereafter. Evans began his graduate studies at the University of Chicago, under the encouragement of his mentor and chemistry professor, Dr. Henry McBay. Due to segregation policies in the south, Evans' education was, ironically, subsidized by the State of Georgia. After passing his qualifying exam, Evans' interest in electron densities led him to collaborate with Stefan Hefner, his research advisor, in the geophysical sciences department, particularly in the area of crystal physics. His dissertation, "Order, Disorder and Hyperfine Interactions in Spinel Ferrites," focused on the atomic interactions between minerals and magnetic materials. He earned his Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago in 1968 and was awarded a fellowship at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.).

Chemistry.

University of Chicago.

McBay, Henry C.

University of Manitoba.

Magnetic materials.

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_006, TRT: 6:29:39 ?

Billy Joe Evans earned his Ph.D. degree in chemistry from the University of Chicago in 1968. After graduating, Evans was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship position at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, where his research centered on solid state physics and magnetism. In 1969, Evans was appointed as an assistant professor in the chemistry department at Howard University in anticipation of establishing a research program in magnetism/magnetic materials with physicist, Warren Elliot Henry. However, Evans soon found Howard not to be a good match for him and he accepted a position in the department of geology and mineralogy at the University of Michigan. Evans talks about his experience working at the University of Michigan and his other professional research activities.

University of Chicago.

University of Manitoba.

Magnetic materials.

Howard University.

University of Michigan.

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_007, TRT: 7:28:48 ?

Billy Joe Evans talks about his job prospects after graduating from the University of Chicago in 1968. In 1977, Evans was appointed as an associate at the Danforth Foundation, whose aim was to encourage mentorship between the faculty and students. Later that year, Evans was awarded a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at the Phillips Universität Marburg in Germany, where he served as visiting professor and conducted high-pressure studies. In the 1980s, Evans served as a leading figure of several research and mentorship programs geared towards improving minority students' access and participation in STEM. Evans talks about his other professional activities with the University of Michigan, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Atlanta University.

Danforth Foundation (Saint Louis, Mo.).

Mentoring in education.

Philipps-Universität Marburg.

Minorities in science.

University of Michigan.

American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_008, TRT: 8:30:08 ?

Billy Joe Evans spent over thirty years of his professional career at the University of Michigan. In 1987, Evans was appointed as coordinator of the inorganic cluster in the chemistry department, and served in that capacity until 1991. Evans has held consultancy appointments with the Dynamic Testing Division at Los Alamos National Laboratory, the African American Faculty Advisory Council of DuPont-Merck, the Louisiana State Board of Regents and Inkster, Michigan Public Schools. He is also the recipient of the Chemical Manufacturers Association's Catalyst Medal, The American Chemical Society's Award for Encouraging Disadvantaged Students, and the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring. Evans talks about his relationship to his mentor, Dr. Henry McBay. He also discusses his hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflects on his career.

University of Michigan.

Chemistry.

Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Inkster (Mich.).

Awards.

McBay, Henry C.

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_009, TRT: 9:34:38 ?

Billy Joe Evans and his wife of nearly fifty years, Addie Bell, have three children: William Joseph, a physicist, Carole Elizabeth, a sociologist, and Jesse Niles. The latter passed away at the age of twenty-seven due to cancer. Evans reflects on how he would like to be remembered and describes his photos.

African American families.

Marriage.

Death.

Reminiscing.

Photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Billy Joe Evans, Section A2012_177_001_010, TRT: 10:03:34 ?

Billy Joe Evans describes his photos.

Photographs.