

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Mark Stansbury

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Stansbury, Mark L., Sr., 1942-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Mark Stansbury,
Dates:	April 25, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:04:38).
Abstract:	Radio talk show host and academic administrator Mark Stansbury (1942 -) was a host for over fifty years on WDIA Radio in Memphis, Tennessee, and served as the assistant to four University of Memphis presidents. Stansbury was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 25, 2014, in Memphis, Tennessee. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_037
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Gospel radio show host and academic administrator Markhum “Mark” L. Stansbury, Sr. was born on April 5, 1942 in Memphis, Tennessee to Willie and Eliza Markham Stansbury. He graduated from Booker T. Washington High School, where he was editor of the yearbook. In 1960, at age eighteen, Stansbury was hired as a radio personality and gospel announcer at Memphis, Tennessee’s WDIA-AM, where he has worked for over fifty years. He went on to receive his B.A. degree in history from Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee in 1966.

Upon graduation from Lane College, Stansbury was named the school’s public relations director. He then took a job with Holiday Inns, Inc. in 1969 as a community relations manager, where he worked until 1981. From 1983 to 1987, Stansbury was an insurance agent for Union Central Life Insurance Company and American United Insurance Company, and then served as special assistant to the governor of the State of Tennessee from 1987 until 1989. Stansbury was named assistant to the president of the University of Memphis in 1989, and went on to work for four university presidents. In addition, Stansbury has served as vice president of advancement at LeMoyne-Owen College and interim president of Shelby State Community College (now Southwest Tennessee Community College). He was also a regular photographer for the *Memphis World* and *Tri-State Defender*, and briefly worked as a reporter and copy editor for *The Commercial Appeal*.

Stansbury has been affiliated with or served on the boards of Leadership Memphis, E 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District, St. Andrew AME Church, Memphis Race Relations and Diversity Institute, Shelby Farms, YMCA, Goals of Memphis, and the University of Memphis Foundation. He was appointed to the Shelby County Historical Commission, and served as an advisory board member of South Central Bell. He was a NAACP Freedom Fund Gala Coordinator; past president of the Public Relations Society of America-Memphis Chapter; and served on the Steering Committee for the United Negro College Fund. Stansbury was also a founder of Diversity Memphis, an organization which fights to eliminate bigotry.

He is a member of the United Negro College Fund Hall of Fame, and has received the Award of Merit, the highest award presented to a citizen by the Mayor of Memphis. Stansbury was also named Parent of the Year by the Memphis Rotary Club, and was the first person to receive the University of Memphis' Campus Unity Award in 1993.

Mark Stansbury was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 25, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Mark Stansbury was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 25, 2014, in Memphis, Tennessee, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Radio talk show host and academic administrator Mark Stansbury (1942 -) was a host for over fifty years on WDIA Radio in Memphis, Tennessee, and served as the assistant to four University of Memphis presidents.

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:

Stansbury, Mark L., Sr., 1942-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Stansbury, Mark L., Sr., 1942---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Radio Talk Show Host

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Mark Stansbury, April 25, 2014. 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 Mark Stansbury, Section A2014_037_001_001, TRT: 1:28:25 ?

Mark Stansbury was born on April 5, 1942 in Memphis, Tennessee to Eliza Markham Stansbury and Willie Stansbury. His maternal grandparents, Mary Carter Markham and Ed Markham, lived in Morgan City, Mississippi, where they raised pigs and chickens. His grandfather also picked cotton and worked as a laborer. Stansbury's mother was educated through the fifth grade, and then became a domestic. She met Stansbury's father in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After their brief relationship ended, Stansbury's mother moved to Memphis, where he was born and raised by his mother and maternal grandmother. He grew up in the Foote Homes community, a working class housing project that was home to many of the participants in the Memphis sanitation workers strike of 1968. Stansbury began his education at Leath Elementary School, where he was mentored by his teacher, Juanita Brewster Crenshaw. During the sixth grade, he was interviewed on the air by WDIA Radio personality Nat D. Williams.

Video Oral History Interview with Mark Stansbury, Section A2014_037_001_002, TRT: 2:29:11 ?

Mark Stansbury was raised in the Foote Homes housing projects in Memphis, Tennessee. He attended the Saint Andrew A.M.E. Church, where he remained an active member of the congregation at the time of the interview. At the age of twelve years old, Stansbury secured his first job as a delivery boy. He also helped his mother with domestic work. Stansbury went on to attend Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis. He served as editor of the Washingtonian school newspaper, and also edited the yearbook. During the tenth grade, he was selected to join the Teen Town Singers by Catherine Rivers Johnson, who was the director of the St. Cecilia Glee Club. Through the Teen Town Singers, Stansbury was introduced to WDIA Radio jockeys Rufus Thomas and A.C. Williams. While still in high school, he landed a position as a board engineer at WDIA Radio. After graduating in 1960, Stansbury left the Teen Town Singers and continued working for the radio station, where he met his first wife.

Video Oral History Interview with Mark Stansbury, Section A2014_037_001_003, TRT: 3:29:07 ?

Mark Stansbury attended Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis, Tennessee, and worked at WDIA Radio station as a control board operator. During this period, Stansbury also developed an interest in journalism and photography, and began writing and taking pictures for the Tri-State Defender. After high school, he briefly attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, where he further developed his skills as a photographer. He returned to Memphis after one year, and secured an internship under photojournalist Ernest Withers. Withers became Stansbury's mentor, and encouraged him to finish his degree at Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee. While there, Stansbury was recruited to host a Top 40 program on WJAK Radio. At this point, he remembers playing artists like Carla Thomas, The Beatles and The Beach Boys, and describes his signature sign off message. Additionally, Stansbury talks about his audience and the radio personalities on WDIA Radio in Memphis.

Video Oral History Interview with Mark Stansbury, Section A2014_037_001_004, TRT: 4:32:01 ?

Mark Stansbury attended Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, where he studied history and education. He was mentored by education professor Edna Cawthorn, as well as Lane College President Chester Arthur Kirkendoll, who later became a bishop of the C.M.E. church. Stansbury also pledged to the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. After graduating in 1966, he secured a position at Lane College as a public relations director. During this period, he continued his freelance photography for the Tri-State Defender and the Memphis World publications. In that role, Stansbury photographed Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. along with A.B. McEwen, Sr. and James Lawson at the Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee one week prior to Dr. King's assassination in 1968. Stansbury later

returned to Memphis and married his first wife. He secured a position at WDIA Radio, where he hosted a program on Sunday afternoons. He also became a community relations manager at Holiday Inns, Inc., where he worked until 1981.

Video Oral History Interview with Mark Stansbury, Section A2014_037_001_005, TRT: 5:30:14 ?

Mark Stansbury worked for the Holiday Inns, Inc. in Memphis, Tennessee until 1981. Afterwards, he found work as an insurance salesman, and also continued his freelance photography and his weekly broadcast on WDIA Radio. In 1987, he was hired as a field director in the office of Tennessee Governor Ned Ray Mcwherter, and then served as the governor's assistant until 1989. That year, Stansbury was offered the position of assistant to the president at Memphis State University. He went on to serve as interim president of Shelby State Community College in Memphis, where he worked to secure state funding for a new library and administration building. In 1994, he returned to Memphis State University, which was renamed the University of Memphis. There, Stansbury organized a ceremony to honor the Memphis State Eight, who integrated the student body in 1959. In 2008, Stansbury retired from the University of Memphis. He briefly served as vice president of advancement at Memphis' LeMoyné-Owen College.

Video Oral History Interview with Mark Stansbury, Section A2014_037_001_006, TRT: 6:26:40 ?

Mark Stansbury retired in 2008 from the administration of the University of Memphis in Memphis, Tennessee. He was later appointed to the Shelby County Historical Commission, and served on the committee that approved historical markers in the area. Stansbury also belonged to the board of directors of the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute of Social Change, and was involved with the development of Shelby Farms Park. In addition to his civic activities, Stansbury hosted a weekly program on WDIA Radio for over thirty years. At this point in the interview, Stansbury reflects upon his career and his legacy at WDIA Radio. He also talks about his family and his mentor, Ernest Withers, and describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. Stansbury reflects upon his contributions to the community of Memphis, and concludes this part of the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Mark Stansbury, Section A2014_037_001_007, TRT: 7:09:00 ?

Mark Stansbury narrates his photographs.