

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert Tutman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Tutman, Robert, 1946-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Robert Tutman,
Dates:	October 22, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:22:45).
Abstract:	Photojournalist and producer Robert Tutman (1946 -) was the first African American cameraman hired by CBS News, where he served from 1970 to 1999. Tutman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 22, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_261
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Cameraman and producer Robert Tutman was born on October 15, 1946 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Tutman initially worked as a still photographer until 1968, when he was hired as a cameraman for NBC's WBAL-TV in Baltimore. In 1970, Tutman moved to CBS Network News in Chicago, Illinois, becoming the company's first African American cameraman. For the next twenty-five years, Tutman covered national and international news stories for CBS. He also taught as an associate professor at Columbia University in 1973 through the Michelle Clark Minority Fellowship.

From 1995 to 1999, Tutman served as a senior cameraman for Chicago's WBBM-TV, where he worked on breaking news stories, from hard news to feature pieces, documentaries, special projects and long format programs. In 1996, Tutman established his own production company, and, from 1999 to 2001 he produced fifty half-hour programs and twelve three-hour specials for the Chicago Public Schools. He went on to serve as a producer for Monument City Films in Baltimore from 2001 to 2002; and, in 2003, became a producer for WYCC-TV, a PBS station based in Chicago. Tutman later worked as director of photography for The Africa Channel and as a producer at Chicago Film Works. His film credits include *The Providence Effect* and *Common Enemy*.

Tutman's honors include Emmy Award nominations as well as the Gold Camera Award, which he received during the 1996 Chicago Industrial Film Festival for his work on *Common Enemy*. He has also served as president of the Chicago chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. He lives in Chicago, Illinois.

Robert Tutman was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 22, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Robert Tutman was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 22, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Photojournalist and producer Robert Tutman (1946 -) was the first African American cameraman hired by CBS News, where he served from 1970 to 1999.

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:

Tutman, Robert, 1946-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Tutman, Robert, 1946---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Photojournalist

Producer

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 Robert Tutman, October 22, 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 Robert Tutman, Section A2014_261_001_001, TRT: 1:28:41 ?

Robert Tutman was born on October 15, 1946 in Baltimore, Maryland to Theresa Allen Tutman and Robert Tutman III. His maternal great-grandfather, Milton Allen, left Texas after emancipation, and settled in Pamplin City, Virginia, where Tutman's grandfather, Claude Allen, was born. Tutman's maternal grandmother, Minnie Magee Allen, was born in Oxford, North Carolina to David Magee, a Scotsman, and Rose Magee, who was black and Native American. After marrying, Tutman's maternal grandparents moved to Cumberland, Maryland, and then relocated to Baltimore, where Tutman's

mother was born in 1922. She went on to study at the Coppin Teachers College. Tutman's paternal great-grandfather, Robert Tutman I, migrated from France to Baltimore, where his son, Robert Tutman II, worked as a carpenter. He married Viola Tutman, and they raised fourteen children, including Tutman's father. Born in 1920, Tutman's father served in the Korean War, and studied to become a civil engineer at American University in Washington, D.C.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Tutman, Section A2014_261_001_002, TRT: 2:30:10 ?

Robert Tutman grew up in the Sandtown neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland, where he lived with his brother, Dan Tutman, and many maternal relatives. Tutman attended the Emmanuel Christian Community Church, and belonged to a Boy Scout troop. He began his education at P.S. 122, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School, and then transferred to P.S. 111, Frances Ellen Harper School. From an early age, Tutman aspired to become a photographer. He was encouraged by his maternal uncle, Milton Allen, who introduced Tutman to his mentor, photographer Reid Abney. Tutman went on to attend Booker T. Washington Junior High School, and was one of the first black students to enroll at the Baltimore City College, which was a public magnet high school. There, he organized a photography club, and raised funds for cameras and a dark room. Tutman intentionally failed the eleventh grade to avoid being drafted into the Vietnam War. He graduated in 1966, and enrolled at Baltimore's Coppin State College.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Tutman, Section A2014_261_001_003, TRT: 3:31:09 ?

Robert Tutman excelled as a student at Coppin State College in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was mentored by English professor Guilbert Daley. He left before graduating to work as a machinist in the Koppers Company steel mill, where he was promised a position as an industrial photographer. However, Tutman was refused the promotion, and eventually left the mill after witnessing his white coworkers' response to the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Within two weeks, Tutman secured work as a cameraman under news director Robert Matthews III at WBAL-TV in Baltimore. There, he covered the inauguration of President Richard Nixon in 1968. In 1969, Tutman moved to WBBM-TV in Chicago, Illinois. He was recruited to help cover the assassination of Fred Hampton, as the local Black Panther Party refused to speak with white news teams. In 1970, Tutman was hired by CBS News, where his first assignment was covering the Vietnam War.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Tutman, Section A2014_261_001_004, TRT: 4:34:29 ?

Robert Tutman became the first African American cameraman at CBS News in 1970. He also taught courses at Columbia University's Michele Clark Fellowship Program for Minority Journalists during the early 1970s. Through his contacts at the school, Tutman was introduced to black journalist Ed Bradley, who joined CBS News around the same time. Tutman covered Emperor Hirohito's visit to the United States in 1975, and traveled with Walter Mondale during his vice presidential campaign in 1976. He developed a close relationship with Mondale, who agreed to visit Tutman's maternal grandmother, Minnie Magee Allen, when she fell ill during the campaign. Tutman also covered Mayor Harold Washington's first election in Chicago, Illinois, and subsequently formed a friendship with the mayor. Additionally, Tutman remembers meeting Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela, and talks about working with CBS News reporters like Douglas Edwards, Walter Cronkite, Dan Rather, Winston Burdett, Mike Wallace and Hughes Rudd.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Tutman, Section A2014_261_001_005, TRT: 5:30:11 ?

Robert Tutman worked to combat the prejudices of white reporters throughout

his career as a CBS News cameraman. He refused to portray black communities in ways that conformed to majority stereotypes, but he still encountered suspicion from some black activist groups for his involvement with a majority news organization. Tutman was detained by government agencies on several occasions during his career. He was held by the FBI during the occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota by Native American activists in 1973, and was detained in Cairo, Egypt while covering the funeral of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981. He was also captured by the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua in the mid-1980s. Tutman served as a chapter president of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), and campaigned for the national presidency. He left NABJ in the late 1990s, when the organization failed to support his discrimination lawsuit against CBS, Inc.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Tutman, Section A2014_261_001_006, TRT: 6:32:22 ?

Robert Tutman filed a discrimination lawsuit against CBS News in 1996, after he was racially harassed by producer Robert Vasilopoulos. After leaving the network, Tutman worked on the film 'Common Enemy' about gentrification on the South Side of Chicago, and produced the documentary series 'Children First' with students from the Chicago Public Schools. In 2001, Tutman worked briefly for Monument City Films in Baltimore, Maryland. There, he produced 'Party Boys,' which documented two students' efforts to fund their education. Then, Tutman joined the City Colleges of Chicago, where he taught journalism and produced 'Bill Cosby on Parenting,' which was nominated for an Emmy Award. Tutman also produced 'Soundtracks at Red Kiva' for The Africa Channel, and served as director of photography for 'The Providence Effect,' a documentary about the Providence St. Mel School in Chicago. At this point in the interview, Tutman talks about the changes in camera technology, and reflects upon his life and legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Robert Tutman, Section A2014_261_001_007, TRT: 7:15:43 ?

Robert Tutman grew up alongside the future journalist DeWayne Wickham in Baltimore, Maryland. The two had similar careers, but grew apart due to differences in their political beliefs. At this point, Tutman talks about his hopes for the African American community, and describes his concerns for the future of black journalism. He also talks about his family. Tutman concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.