

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Otis Johnson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Johnson, Otis S. (Otis Samuel), 1942-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson,
Dates:	February 8, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:36:54).
Abstract:	Political official and civic leader Otis Johnson (1942 -) served as the Alderman of District 2 on the Savannah City Council from 1982 to 1988, and as Mayor of Savannah from 2003 to 2012. Johnson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 8, 2017, in Savannah, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_024
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Political official and civic leader Otis Johnson was born on March 26, 1942 in Savannah, Georgia to Lillian Spencer and Otis S. Johnson, Sr. Johnson attended Paulsen Street Elementary School and Cuyler Street Junior High School in Savannah. He graduated from Alfred E. Beach High School in 1960. Johnson earned his A.A. degree in liberal arts from Armstrong State University in 1964, becoming the university's first African American graduate. He earned his B.A. degree in history from the University of Georgia in 1967, and his M.S.W. degree in social work from Clark Atlanta University in 1969. Johnson received his Ph.D. degree in social welfare from Brandeis University in 1980.

Johnson served in the U.S. Navy Reserve from 1959 to 1965. Johnson worked for the Economic Opportunity Authority for Savannah-Chatham County Area, Inc. and the City of Savannah Model Cities Program before joining the faculty at Savannah State University in 1971. He was responsible for establishing the undergraduate program in social work at the university. Johnson served as the Alderman of District Two on the Savannah City Council from 1983 to 1988. He resigned in 1988 to become the executive director of the Chatham Savannah Youth Futures Authority. In 1998, he returned to Savannah State University as the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. In the next year, Johnson joined the Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education, serving for four years. He was elected as mayor of Savannah in 2003, becoming the second African American to assume the role. After leaving the mayor's office in 2012, Johnson became a scholar in residence and professor emeritus at Savannah State University. His autobiography, *From 'N Word' to Mr. Mayor: Experiencing the American Dream*, was published in 2016.

In 2001 and 2006, Johnson was featured in *Georgia Trend* magazine's list of "Most Influential Georgians." He was the recipient of Armstrong State University's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2005 as well as the Notable Alumnus Award in 2010.

Johnson served as chair of the board of trustees of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation and MDC, Inc. He was also a member of the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives.

Johnson has one daughter, Alexis Williamson.

Otis Johnson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 8, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson was conducted by Denise Gines on February 8, 2017, in Savannah, Georgia, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Political official and civic leader Otis Johnson (1942 -) served as the Alderman of District 2 on the Savannah City Council from 1982 to 1988, and as Mayor of Savannah from 2003 to 2012.

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:

Johnson, Otis S. (Otis Samuel), 1942-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Johnson, Otis S. (Otis Samuel), 1942---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Mayor

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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 The Honorable Otis Johnson, February 8, 2017. 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 The Honorable Otis Johnson, Section A2017_024_001_001,

TRT: 1:30:43 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson, Section A2017_024_001_002,
TRT: 2:28:13 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson, Section A2017_024_001_003,
TRT: 3:31:20 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson, Section A2017_024_001_004,
TRT: 4:28:59 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson, Section A2017_024_001_005,
TRT: 5:29:15 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson, Section A2017_024_001_006,
TRT: 6:29:56 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson, Section A2017_024_001_007,
TRT: 7:27:24 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Otis Johnson, Section A2017_024_001_008,
TRT: 8:11:04 ?