



# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Frederick Oliver

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Oliver, Frederick
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Frederick Oliver,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 15, 2010
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2010
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:40:44).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Frederick Oliver (1940 - ) served as Chair of the Physics Department at Morgan State University for over twenty years and has held research appointments at highly regarded facilities like the Argonne National Laboratory and NASA. Oliver was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 15, 2010, in Baltimore, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2010_057
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Physicist Frederick William Oliver was born on October 15, 1940, in Baltimore City, Maryland, to Hattie and Willis Oliver. Oliver was raised on J Street, in an African American community located in Sparrows Point. He attended Sollers Point High School, graduating in 1958. Oliver then went to Morgan State University where he received his B.S. degree in physics in 1962, under the mentorship of Dr. Julius Taylor. Oliver continued his education, receiving his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Howard University in 1965 and 1972, respectively, both in condensed matter physics. His research examines the Mossbauer Effect and its uses in spectroscopy.

In 1969, Oliver joined the faculty at Morgan State University as an associate professor. In 1979, Oliver became Chair of the physics department at Morgan State University, taking over the position from his mentor, Dr. Julius Taylor. He served until 1995, and then again from 1999 to 2006. While at Morgan State University, Oliver held appointments with the Naval Research Laboratory, the Argonne National Laboratory, the University of Maryland, NASA, Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, Bell Laboratories, and the Harry Diamond Laboratories. Oliver also served as the university's Radiation Safety Officer for fifteen years beginning in 1990. Since 2007, Oliver has been an appointed part-time administrative judge with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel.

Oliver has published thirty-two full-length papers since 1965, and presented at numerous conferences. He has been awarded the Dr. Iva G. Jones Medallion Mantle Award and is an inducted member of Beta Kappa Chi, Sigma Chi, and Sigma Pi Sigma. Oliver's most recent grant was funded by the Department of Energy for its "Educational Bridge Program." Oliver lives in Maryland with his wife Dianne. He has two grown children, Chaszetta and Chinyere from a former marriage.

Frederick William Oliver was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 15, 2010.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Frederick Oliver was conducted by James Stith on July 15, 2010, in Baltimore, Maryland, and was recorded on 6 Betacam SP videocassettes. Frederick Oliver (1940 - ) served as Chair of the Physics Department at Morgan State University for over twenty years and has held research appointments at highly regarded facilities like the Argonne National Laboratory and NASA.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Frederick Oliver.

Stith, James (Interviewer).

Stearns, Scott (Videographer).

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews.

Frederick Oliver--Interviews.

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African American physicists--Interviews.

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

ScienceMakers

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EducationMakers

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## 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 Frederick Oliver, July 15, 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 7/27/2011 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage, July 15, 2010

Video Oral History Interview with Frederick Oliver, Section A2010\_057\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:12

Frederick Oliver begins by talking about his family background, including his parents Haddie and Willis Oliver and his siblings Robert, Charles, Major, Dorothy, James, Willis, and Donald. Oliver grew up in Sparrows Point, Baltimore County, Maryland, a town built around a steel mill. Oliver attended

school at Bragg Elementary, but was not a very good student early on. Because blacks and whites worked together at the steel mill, there was very little harassment between the races, but also very little interaction outside of the mill. Oliver remembers playing sports on Saturdays with neighborhood children as well as his mother's Sunday dinners.

African American families--Maryland.

Steel industry and trade--United States.

Race relations--Maryland.

Student activities.

Video Oral History Interview with Frederick Oliver, Section A2010\_057\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:44

Frederick Oliver talks about his high school experience, including teacher Ruth Law who sparked his aptitude for physics. Even though Oliver grew up in a segregated society, he says that he did not understand the effects of segregation until he worked in the steel mill during college. He was the second person in his family (after his brother Donald) to attend college, and he went to Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland where Julius Taylor was chair of the physics department. Oliver's interest in science and specifically physics, solidified while at Morgan State University.

Steel industry and trade--Race relations.

Morgan State University--Physics.

Video Oral History Interview with Frederick Oliver, Section A2010\_057\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:16

Frederick Oliver talks about his decision to pursue teaching and to attend Howard University for graduate school. Oliver went to Howard during the 1960s when the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing, but he did not get involved because he spent most of his time studying. Oliver did his graduate research on Mossbauer spectroscopy, also known as nuclear gamma resonance spectroscopy. During graduate school, Oliver further developed his love for physics and for research in particular.

Howard University.

Mossbauer spectroscopy.

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Washington, D.C., 1963.

Solid state physics--Research.

Video Oral History Interview with Frederick Oliver, Section A2010\_057\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:12

Frederick Oliver talks about serving on the faculty at Morgan State University. He left his graduate studies at Howard University in 1969 and finished his thesis while teaching at Morgan, earning his Ph.D. degree in 1972. While at Morgan, Oliver taught graduate courses to high school science teachers and also continued his research in Mossbauer physics. He describes the changes that occurred at Morgan State University during his tenure as department chair, where he followed in 1979, in the footsteps of Dr. Julius Taylor. Oliver was also involved in professional organizations such as the National Technical Association and the American Physical Society.

Morgan State University--Faculty.

Mossbauer spectroscopy.

National Technical Association (U.S.).

American Physical Society.

Video Oral History Interview with Frederick Oliver, Section A2010\_057\_001\_005, TRT: 0:37:50

Frederick Oliver talks about his career path and his definition of success. He mentions that there are abundant opportunities to work with scientific

organizations during the summers, for example. In 1995, Oliver married his second wife, Dianne Polson, who is from Suffolk, Virginia. He goes on to discuss the nature of African Americans in physics and the role that race played in his own career. Oliver finishes by sharing his hopes for the next generation at Morgan State University. He also reflects on his life's accomplishments.

African American physicists.

Video Oral History Interview with Frederick Oliver, Section A2010\_057\_001\_006, TRT: 0:07:30

Frederick Oliver narrates personal photographs.